europress ENTERPRISE
Issue 70 • February 1994 • £3.99 Overseas price £4.25 • Hfl 18.95

AMIGA COMPUTING



CREATE!
The Publisher
Easy to use Pro package
WORTH £40

DIGITAL DaVINCIS
Top art pros tell all

PLUS! Sampler round-up • Scala MM300 • MediaPoint • Protext 6.0 • Spectrum 28/24 • Wavetools Interchange Plus and all the latest news, views and previews

9 770959 963077 02



Hi,

Did you have an absolutely amazing Christmas and did Santa bring you everything you hoped for? I certainly hope so.

Well folks, it's not easy writing the Indi Column 2 weeks before Christmas to meet deadlines for the January Magazines but here goes.

At the time of writing there seems little doubt that the Amiga Desktop Dynamite pack has been a major success story with Sales exceeding every prediction, well done to David Pleasance and his team at Commodore.

Without a doubt the big news has been Commodores decision to add two extra titles to the CD32 Bundle making 4 in total (5 if you buy from Indi).

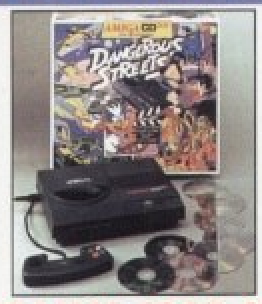
This week Indi have formally announced the SX1 Expansion module for the CD32 allowing the addition of a keyboard and other peripherals. The implications of this are very important for both existing Amiga owners and potential CD32 buyers.

It is now a real alternative to buy a CD32, add an expansion module and keyboard and effectively own an Amiga 1200 with a CD drive rather than the alternative of buying an Amiga 1200 and then adding the CD32. Developements are moving very quickly in this area. I will keep you up to date with more information next month.

Best wishes

Jakki Brambles

AMIGA CD32 — FREE OSCAR, DIGGERS, WING COMMANDER AND DANGEROUS STREETS PLUS INDI EXCLUSIVE FREE LEMMINGS



ONLY £285.99
with 5 great titles

This is the news that all Commodore enthusiasts have been waiting for, the new Microbotics SX1 Expansion module arrives January 1994. The Amiga CD32 is no longer just the best 32 bit CD console around, it is now a fully expandible computer

Add a keyboard and printer increase the memory to 8 Mb, connect to another Amiga and the choice is yours.

The Microbotics SX1 is an internal expansion device that simply connects to your Amiga CD32 via the SX1 port. Connection could not be simpler.

KEYBOARD OPTION Add a Keyboard by simply plugging into the SX1 and turn your CD32 into a real computer

EXTERNAL FLOPPY DRIVE OPTION Add a Zappo Floppy Drive and have access to the thousands of low cost Amiga titles.

PRINTER OPTION Now that you have a real computer why not add a Panasonic Printer and enjoy serious graphics and Word processing.

MEMORY EXPANSION OPTION Increase the memory upto 8Mb by the simple addition of Industry standard 32 bit Simms Modules.

New CD32 Owners

Can now enjoy all of the advantages of real computing by adding a keyboard and other standard peripherals. Add a floppy drive and enjoy access to thousands of low cost Amiga Titles, add a printer and move into graphics and wordprocessing, the expansion possibilities are as flexible as if you owned an Amiga 1200

Separates Prices

SXI CD32 Expansion Module	£139.99
CD32 Keyboard	£ 45.99
Zappo Drive Sale Price	£ 48.99

New Amiga CD32 Pack

	Normal Indi Price	Launch Price
1) Amiga CD32+ 4 games + Lemmings	£289.99	£285.99
2) Zappo Drive	£49.99	£48.99
3) Keyboard	£45.99	£45.99
4) SXI Expansion Module	£139.99	£99
	£525.99	£479.97

SAVE £46

Amiga CD32 Software Titles

	Sale Price
Trolls	£21.50
Pinball fantasies	£20.59
James Pond 2 Robocod	£21.99
Whales Voyage	£21.50
Overkill - Lunar' C	£21.50
Zool	£21.50
Morph	£21.50
Sensible Soccer	£15.99
Liberation	£22.99
Nigel Mansells World Championship	£21.50
[illegible]des II	£21.50
[illegible]n Arenas	£21.50
Deep Core	£16.99

Amiga 4000/030

It's here - The new Amiga 4000/030

The NEW Amiga 4000/030 features a EC68030 processor running at an incredible 25Mhz,(upgradable later) The 4000/030 has a powerful 2 Mb of 32 - bit RAM expandable to 18 Mb using industry standard 32 - bit Simms module. In line with the Amiga 4000/040 the 4000/030 features the AGA graphics chipset, giving you a massive pallet of 16.8 million colours. Without a doubt this is the best value A4000/030 configuration in the UK

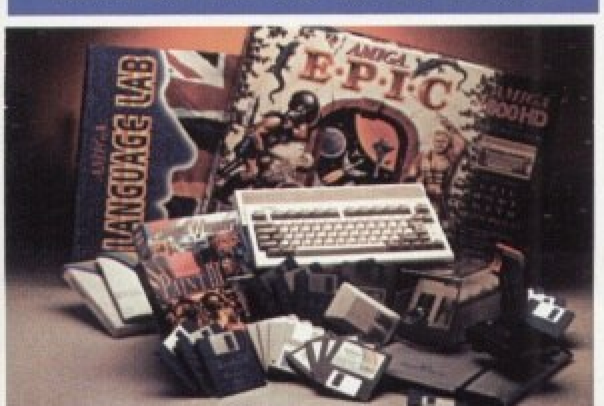


4000/030 80 Mb HD £899.99

A full range of approved upgrades are available for the 4000/030, including additional memory modules, hard drives, FPU's (68881 &68882) and the 24 - bit Opal Vision graphics and video system

Full Range of hard drive sizes available Telephone for a quote

AMIGA A600 EPIC PACK



The Superb A600 Hard Drive Epic Pack

Now available with both 20Mb and 30Mb Hard Drive Options the Epic Pack is arguably the best value pack ever produced by Commodore with a saving of over £100

PACK INCLUDES:

* Amiga 600
* 1 Mb Memory
* Epic * Rome
* Myth * Trivial Pursuit
* Amiga Text
* Deluxe Paint III
* 20 Mb Hard Drive

~~£379.99~~ **£249.99**

* Amiga 600
* 1 Mb Memory
* Epic * Rome
* Myth * Trivial Pursuit
* Amiga Text
* Deluxe Paint III
* 30 Mb Hard Drive

£269.99

* 12 Months at home service.

Amiga 1200 Microbotics Memory Expansion Boards and Accelerators

Do you want your Amiga 1200 to have more memory or to go faster by simply fitting a board into the external trapdoor? Microbotics have an extensive range of products with the immense benefit of 'Chipup' technology. Most boards have soldered chipsets which do not allow expansion beyond your initial purchase. Microbotics products allow you to add extra memory as your computing skills grow and new software arrives demanding even more memory.

CHIP UP Technology

Memory Expansion Boards

Speed	4Mb	8Mb
14 Mhz	£247.99	£447.99
25 Mhz	£307.99	£517.99
50 Mhz	£377.99	£577.99

Accelerator Boards

Speed	4Mb	8Mb
40Mhz	£365.99	£595.99
50 Mhz	£475.99	£709.99

Parnet Adaptor

The Parnet adapter can be used to link any Amiga with a parallel port to another. For example, connect a CDTV to any Amiga and access the world of CD - ROM Software.

£39.99

DON'T SEND ANY MONEY

Until you are 100% certain that any advertiser has the product that you want **in stock** and will deliver it to you **immediately.**

Far too often Jakki Brambles receives letters from customers who are finding it difficult to obtain a refund from an advertiser that has promised to supply but hasn't.

To give you the confidence to purchase **INDI** has joined the **DMA** a very important Independent Authority that demands the highest possible standards from its members. DMA members agree to abide by the British Code of Advertising Practice and to subscribe to the Advertising Standards Board of finance (ASBOF) Look out for the DMA Symbol it is your guarantee signifying to the customer the truly professional edge of the industry.

The DMA Symbol.

CUSTOMER CHARTER

INDI Direct Mail is original and very exciting. Before you buy mail order you must first be confident that you will receive the product you've ordered and that the supplier still be there in the future, should you need them.

A mail order purchase from INDI is a safe and secure decision, and here's why.

INDI is a wholly owned subsidiary of a public company now in it's tenth year of trading and specialising in the supply of computer products.

With a turnover approaching £30 million per annum, we have the resources and the purchasing power to offer you the best deals, deliver them next day nationwide and always be around when you need us.

SALES AND SUPPORT

The INDI sales team have been trained to take your order with the utmost care and efficiency. All stock offered for sale is held in stock, centrally at our group ware house complex and is available for next day delivery, direct to your home or business. If at any time we are out of stock your money will not be banked until the product is available (a point worth checking should you be tempted to purchase elsewhere)

CREDIT FACILITIES

INDI are now able to offer competitive credit facilities on all orders over £200. All credit facilities are subject to status and applicants must be over the age of 18.

If you would like a quote simply call our our sales line where acceptance can normally be notified within the hour. We are also able to offer Credit Insurance to cover repayments in the event of sickness or unemployment.

AMOUNT* OF CREDIT	12 MONTHS MONTHLY PYMNTS	12 MONTHS TOTAL PAYABLE	24 MONTHS MONTHLY PYMNTS	24 MONTHS TOTAL PAYABLE	36 MONTHS MONTHLY PAYABLE	36 MONTHS TOTAL PYMNTS
200	£22.00	£264.00	£12.00	£298.32	£9.31	£335.63
500	£54.99	£659.88	£31.06	£745.44	£23.27	£837.72
1000	£109.98	£1319.76	£62.13	£1491.12	£46.54	£1675.44

APR 29.9% WRITTEN QUOTATIONS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

*After deposit paid

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AFTER SALES AND SPECIALIST SERVICE

All products are guaranteed for 12 months. Some products carry a 12 months at home service and repair guarantee (where indicated). In the unlikely event that any product purchased from INDI arrives at your home faulty, we will collect from your home and replace the product completely free of charge.

As part of our policy of continual product development and refinement, we reserve the right to change specifications of products advertised. Please confirm current specifications at the time of ordering.

Prices are valid for month of publication only.

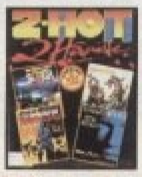
TEL: 0543 419 999 FAX: 0543 418 079

CREDIT AVAILABLE ON 6,12, 18, 24, 36 MONTHS.

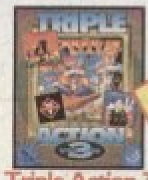
WHY NOT RING NOW FOR A QUOTE. SAME DAY RESPONSE.

LATEST AMIGA 1200 TITLES DISCOUNT PRICES

	RRP	SALE
Alien Breed 2 Non stop action as you investigate an Alien Presence	~~£29.99~~	£19.99
Body Blows Galactic Dan Junior squares up to the Galaxies wierd Combatants	~~£29.99~~	£19.99
Diggers Mine your own millions in this underground strategy game	~~£34.99~~	£22.99
Pinball Fantasies Space age shoot 'em up	~~£29.99~~	£19.99
Elite 2 3D adventure role playing game at its best	~~£29.99~~	£19.99
Civilization Play God and build your own new world.	~~£39.99~~	£25.99
Chaos Engine Assume different guises and shoot to escape all levels	~~£29.99~~	£19.99
Elite 2 Legendary space adventures made bigger and better	~~£29.99~~	£19.99
Soccer Kid Create a winning football team to win the football league	~~£29.99~~	£19.99
Jurassic Park Sure fire monster hit.	~~£29.99~~	£17.99



2 Hot to Handle
4 Great Action Classics
*Golden Axe *Super Off Road *Total Recall *Shadow Warrior
Amiga ~~£13.99~~
A500 / A600



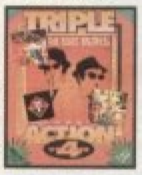
Triple Action 3
* Titus the Fox* Ghostbuster II * Targhan
Amiga ~~£12.99~~
A500 / A600

All Games £10.99

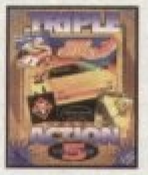


Football Crazy Pack
3 Great Soccer Classic* Kick off 2* The Final Whistle * Player Manager s
Amiga ~~£13.99~~
A500/ A600

Triple Action 4
Will really keep you on the edge of your seat
*Blues Brothers *Sultan *Maya
Amiga ~~£13.99~~
A500 / A600



Triple Action 5
* Crazy Cars
* Grand Prix Master
* Battletech
Amiga ~~£13.99~~
A500 / A600



EDUCATIONAL SOFTWARE TITLES

Indi have carefully selected these educational titles as the best in their particular area. All educational software is offered at special discount prices

Noddy's Big Adventure (3 - 7yrs)	~~£17.49~~	£15.99
Noddy's Playtime (3 - 7 yrs)	~~£17.49~~	£15.99
ADI French (11 - 12 yrs)	~~£16.99~~	£15.99
ADI Maths (12 - 13yrs)	~~£16.99~~	£15.99
ADI Junior Read (6 - 7 yrs)	~~£14.49~~	£12.99
ADI Junior Count (6 -7 yrs)	~~£14.49~~	£12.99
ADI Maths (13 - 14yrs)	~~£16.99~~	£15.99
ADI English (13 - 14 yrs)	~~£16.99~~	£15.99

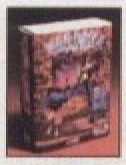
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Did you know that Indi regularly deliver throughout the world? Fax or Telephone us for an immediate response.

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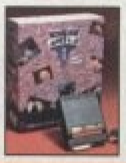
AMIGA PROFESSIONAL PRODUCTS



ROMBO AUDIO VISUAL MEGAMIX. Low cost, hi spec digital effects cartridge plugs into the printer port of the Amiga.Allows stereo sampling from almost any musical source.
INDI PRICE ~~£29.99~~ SALE £27.99

TAKE 2. Animation package is a must for computer artists and enthusiasts of all ages .As used in Rolf Harris Cartoon Club.
INDI PRICE ~~£37.99~~ SALE £29.99





VIDI AMIGA 12. The ultimate low cost colour digitiser for the Amiga. "The best value full colour digitiser on the market "AMIGA FORMAT.
INDI PRICE ~~£74.99~~ SALE £69.99

ROMBO VIDI AMIGA 12 (RT). Based on the best selling Vidi Amiga 12. This all new version offers real time colour capture from any video source. Full AGA chipset support as standard for all A1200 / 4000 users.
INDI PRICE ~~£129.99~~ SALE £127.99

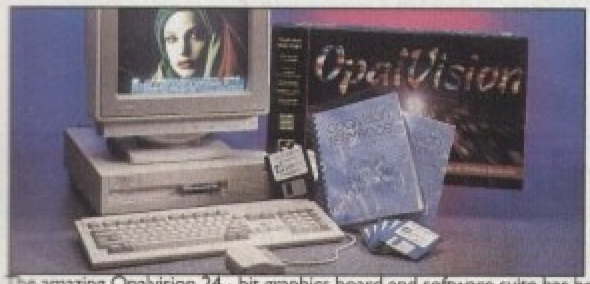
ROMBO VIDI AMIGA 24(RT). For the more serious user, this 24 - bit version will again capture from from any video source with true photo realistic images! A staggering 16.7 million colours can be utilised with incredible results. Full AGA chipset support.
INDI PRICE ~~£219.99~~ SALE £199.99

ROCTEC ROCGEN PLUS. As above but with extra features such as tinting and signal inversion. Allows for real time editing of graphics. Compatible with all Amigas.
INDI PRICE ~~£129.99~~ SALE £127.99

ROCTEC ROCKEY. The ultimate accessory for Amiga / Video fans. Separate RGB controls to chroma key on any colour. INDI PRICE ~~£249.99~~ SALE £199.99

YOUR IMAGINATION IS THE ONLY FRONTIER

The NEW OPAL VISION system(Rev.2)



The amazing Opalvision 24 - bit graphics board and software suite has been updated and is now even better value for money.
The software suite now includes:
Opal Paint V2.0 - Now includes full magic wand implementation and Alpha Channel that allows photo compositing with selectable levels on a pixel by pixel basis.The new Chrominance effect allows absolute, real time control of image contrast, brilliance and re - mapping of colours.
Opal AnimMATE V2.0 - ofering real time play back of animations created by ray tracers, landscape generators, morphers and all other 24 - Bit software.
Opal Hotkey V2.0 Display OpalVision graphics anytime with key combinations.
"Quite simply, it's a spectacular product - **Amiga Computing**
"Undoubtedly the finest, most professional paint program to arrive on the Amiga" - **Amiga Format**
"Professional quality at this Price can't be turned away" - **Amiga User International**
"The verdict was unanimous - brilliant" - **Amiga Shopper**
~~£349.99~~ £339.99

MORPH PLUS

You've seen Michael Jackson's video, you've seen the television adverts using the latest techniques in morphing, now now you can create the same results but at a fraction of the cost. Morph Plus is the latest and the ultimate in this technology. Whether you are a professional artist or just want to experiment at home Morph Plus is a must.
INDI PRICE ~~£109.99~~ SALE £108.99

DELUXE PAINT IV AGA

Combines powerful tools with an intuitive interface so both professionals and beginners alike can get superb results quickly. New enhancements to the software include the ability to paint and animate in 4696 colours in the Amiga's HAM (Hold and Modify)mode. New animation features also include metamorphosis allowing you to change one image into another. You determine the number of frames and DPaint IV does the rest.
INDI PRICE ~~£61.99~~ SALE £59.99

ART DEPARTMENT PROFESSIONAL

The ultimate in image processing providing many key benefits to Amiga users working with pictures.With ADPro you can read, write and convert between most common image file formats with unmatched flexibility. Full support for JPEG image makes it possible to maintain an image library in full 24 - bit colour without needing massive hard drive storage. Typically a 600 Kb image can be compressed down to 40 Kb!!
INDI PRICE ~~£132.99~~ SALE £124.99

REAL 3D V2

Is a full featured 3D animation, modelling and rendering program. With Real 3D V2 you can produce high quality images and animations of three dimensional models with an astounding level of realism. Imagine creating an animation that shows a handful of balls bounce down a flight of stairs to the bottom. Gravity, collision, deflection and the elasticity of the balls are all automatically calculated by the program!
INDI PRICE ~~£299.99~~ SALE £289.99

Professional software is imported and sometimes subject to delay. Confirm delivery at time of order.

Spring Sale

See this symbol for sale deals

All products are strictly subject to availability. Phone for details.



COMMODORES NEW DUAL SYNC MONITOR

1942 MONITOR
This new monitor has been specially designed for the New Amiga 1200 and 4000 computers in order for you to enjoy their fantastic graphics to the full. The 1942 Monitor features built in stereo speakers
~~£349.99~~ £347



SHARP MONITOR / TV

The Superb Sharp 14" Monitor / TV provides a real alternative to a Commodore Monitor with full function remote control 39 channel electronic auto search tuning, digital on screen display and 1.5 watt mpo audio output, all you need to know is the **Low, Low Indi Price.** So, unless you need High resolution graphics look no further, the Sharp Monitor / TV is the product for you complete with connectivity cable and including 12 Months Warranty
~~£169.99~~ £165



2MB SMARTCARD. The original and still the only fully PCMCIA compatible memory card for A600/ A1200.Comes with lifetime guarantee. Beware of cheap imitations.
INDI PRICE £109.99 SALE £99.99

4MB SMARTCARD. Same as above but maximum 4MB.
INDI PRICE £159.99
£155.99 SALE



1085S MONITOR

The Commodore 1085s Stereo Monitor. Compatible with all Amiga products.
FEATURING
* Stereo Sound * High resolution Display
* Ergonomic Design * Full Amiga Conectivity pack
~~£189.99~~ £169.99



ZAPPO EXTERNAL FLOPPY

You've seen all the reviews on this popular and affordable second Amiga drive. Compatible with all Amigas.
~~£49.99~~ £48.99
Quality: 9 out of 10. Exceptional value for money. AMIGA COMPUTING JAN 93

NEW LOW PRICE IDE INTERNAL HARD DRIVES

Indi can now offer top quality 2.5" Internal Hard Drives for the Amiga 600 and 1200 at unbeatable prices. All drives come complete with a cable and installation software.

80Mb	2.5" Internal HD's	~~£179.99~~	£179
120Mb	2.5" Internal HD's	~~£209.99~~	£199.99
170Mb	2.5" Internal HD's	~~£239.99~~	£237



ZAPPY GIFT PACK
A great value pack for all Amiga 600 and 1200 owners. * ZAPSAC Rucksac and ZAPPO Multi-coloured T - shirt * Commodore disk wallet * Python Microswitched Joystick * Mousemat * 3 Great Games - International Sports Challenge * Paradroid 90 * Cool Croc Twins
£29.99

ZAPPO 601
Trapdoor upgrade for the A600, 1Mb with RTC
INDI PRICE £49.99

ZAPPO 601 NC
As above only 512K, no clock INDI PRICE £29.99

98.7% of Indi Deliveries arrive next day
(Official Securicor Statistics)

TEL: 0543 419 999 FAX: 0543 418 079

TERMS AVAILABLE OVER 6, 12, 24, & 36 MONTHS SUBJECT TO STATUS.
WHY NOT RING FOR A QUOTE. SAMEDAY RESPONSE. (SEE EXAMPLE)

Panasonic Quiet Colour Printing

We researched the colour printer market at great depth to find a colour printer good enough to cope with Amiga's powerful output, yet at an affordable price..
We found the perfect printer in the and KX - P2123 quiet printer.
We then considered that if you were going to buy a Panasonic printer you would probably need a quality word processing package to use with it. We found that too, with 'Wordworth' yet at a retail price of £129.99 we thought that might be a little too expensive on top of your printer purchase! So together with Panasonic we decided to give a copy of 'Wordworth' free with every Panasonic printer. Of course your might be the fortunate owner of a Desktop Dynamite Pack or maybe the idea of word processing isn't for you. Once again Indi have the solution with the alternative of two great games. How's that for added value?

Panasonic KX - P2123



The new high performance Panasonic KX - P2123 24 pin. Quiet colour printer offers leading edge quiet printing technology at an affordable price

* **Fast Printing Speeds** 192 CPS draft, 64 CPS LQ and 32 SLQ.
* **Colour Printing** 7 colour palette (blue, red, green, yellow, violet, magenta, black)
* **Quiet Printing** Super quiet 43.5 - 46 dBa sound level (most matrix printers are typically in excess of 60 dBa)
* **7 Resident Fonts** Over 152,000 type styles using Super LQ, Courier Prestige, Bold PS, Roman, Script, and Sans Serif Fonts.
* **24PIN Diamond** Printhead High performance and high quality output
* **1 Year Warranty** for total peace of mind.

~~£219.99~~ **£209.99**

Spring Price Reduction

FREE DUST COVER

FREE WORD PROCESSING OPTION

***WORDWORTH AGA COMPLETELY FREE!**

WITH PANASONIC QUIET PRINTERS. The writers choice. The ultimate word processor for AMIGA computers. Wordworth is undoubtedly the ultimate word / document processor for the full range of AMIGA computers. The graphical nature of WORDWORTH makes producing documents faster and easier, with the enhanced printing fonts (including full Panasonic KX - P2123 colour printing support), Collins spell checker and thesaurus, no other word processor comes close. "Without doubt this is one of the best document processors for the AMIGA, Today" (Amiga Format) **NORMAL RRP £129.99 inc. VAT**

INDI ALTERNATIVE

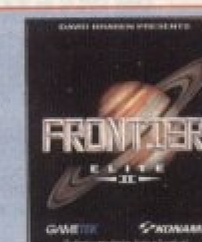
FREE GAMES OPTION

FRONTIER ELITE II

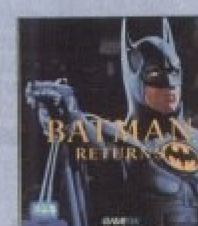
New Game

You may choose from many different roles from explorer to assassin, from stockbroker to trader. Battle with pirates across a galaxy of different worlds, trade or smuggle goods or become a pirate yourself. The goals to aim for are endless, the game is completely open ended.

£29.99 FREE OPTION



"The ultimate in space adventure frontier is the important step for ward for games this decade ".
CU Amiga 97%



BATMAN RETURNS

New Game

A massive 7 disk program, from the first film simulation vastly different to the console version with vivid scenes straight from the hit movie. Batman has returned in style.

£29.99 FREE OPTION

Panasonic KX - P1170



The superb quality KX - P1170 has a normal retail price of £217 but not from INDI. With a massive £97 saving Indi can offer the Panasonic KX - P1170 at only £119.99
But that's not all, how about a free Ribbon worth £9.99. This must be the best printer deal around.

WITH FREE DUSTCOVER AND RIBBON

* **Push, pull tractors**
* **Paper parking**
* **Fast Printing Speeds** - 192 CPS draft, 38 CPS NLQ
* **4 Resident Fonts** - Courier, Prestige, bold PS and Sans Serif
* **3 Paper Paths** - Top, bottom, rear
* **1 Year warranty** - For total peace of mind

Normal Price ~~£217.99~~ **£119.99**

Panasonic KX - P2023



Recently reviewed by Amiga Format "A fine 24 - pin dot matrix printer at a reasonable price" How much - £282. But not from INDI...SAVE A MASSIVE £112 and buy this supreb printer for just £169.99. AND whilst stocks last we'll send you a free auto cut sheetfeeder **worth a further £85.**

WITH FREE SHEETFEEDER

* **Quiet Printing** - 46.5 dBa standard mode, 43.5 dBa super quiet mode
* **On Screen setup disk** - Including printer driver for Windows 3.1
* **Fast Printing Speeds** - 192 CPS draft, 64 CPS LQ
* **4 Resident Fonts** - Courier, Prestige, bold PS and Script
* **2 Paper Paths** - Top, rear
* **1 Year warranty** - For total peace of mind

Normal Price ~~£282.99~~ **£169.99**

PRINTER ACCESSORIES

1) **PANASONIC AUTOMATIC SHEET FEEDER** Automatic sheet feeder for KXP 2123 holds 80 A4 sheets. **INDI PRICE £89.99**
2) **PRINT DUST COVER** Specially tailored quality dust cover for Panasonic KXP 2123 printer. **INDI PRICE £8.99**
3) **PRINTER STAND** 2 piece printer stand. **INDI PRICE £9.99**
4) **PAPER PACK** 500 sheets quality A4 paper. **INDI PRICE £9.99**
5) **CONTINUOUS PAPER** 2000 sheets 1 part listing paper. **INDI PRICE £19.99**
6) **PARALLEL PRINTER CABLE** To be used when connecting Amiga to Panasonic printers. **INDI PRICE £8.99**
7) **PANASONIC COLOUR RIBBON** Colour ribbon for KXP 2123. **INDI PRICE £18.99**
8) **PANASONIC BLACK RIBBON** Black ribbon for KXP 2123. **INDI PRICE £9.99**

SAVE ££££'S ON THE FOLLOWING ACCESSORY PACKS

PACK 1
PANASONIC COLOUR RIBBON PACK Contains 6 colour ribbons for the KXP 2123 RRP £119.99.
INDI PRICE £89.99 SAVE £30!!!

PACK 2
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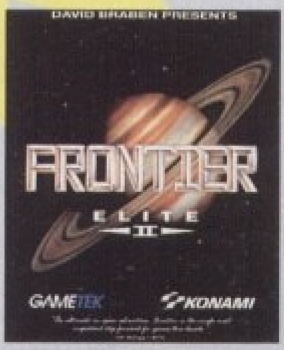
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CONTENTS

AMIGA insight

Nine pages for enquiring minds

The most authoritative monthly columns in the business, covering all areas of specialised Amiga activity

FEATURES



REVIEWS

GAMER

Packed with all the latest and greatest releases. If you love games then turn to the middle of the mag and start reading!

GAME REVIEWS

Amiga Market

Consumers' corner gets into full swing once again with yet more software, hardware and sound advice

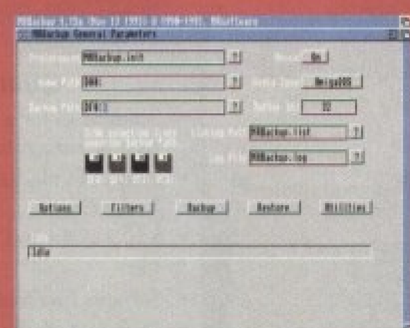


The COVERDISKS

Two disks packed with commercial and shareware software to suit every taste



Professional DTP for all with this powerful publisher complete with its own fonts and PostScript interpreter



MRBackup Professional

Fast and efficient data security from a commercial quality backup program

Scion

Modern geneology program to trace those complex family trees

Share Manager

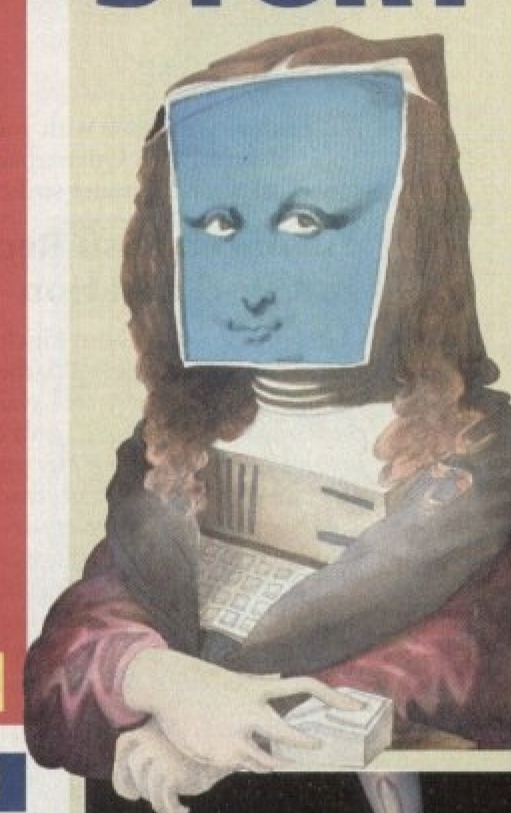
Lucky enough to own a bit of BT? Then this program's for you

Worms

Screen blanker with a built in keyboard lock-out

Turn to page 20

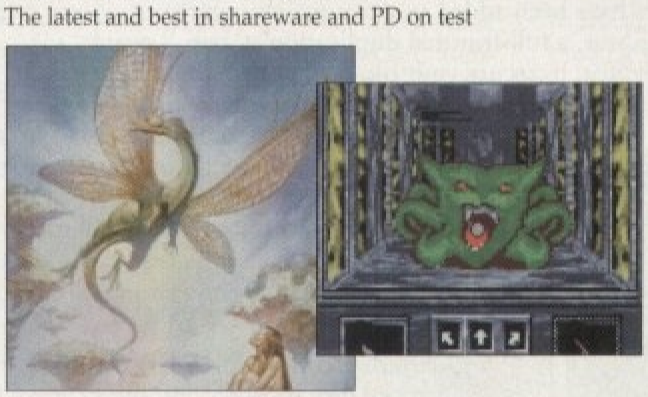
COVER STORY





Phil South talks to the Amiga people behind Jurassic Park, Star Trek VI, Babylon5 and SeaQuest DSV about the machine and its place in the movies... ***Turn to page 32***

REGULARS



Dracula Competition

There's a whole load of Bram Stoker's Dracula goodies to be won – not least the latest game for the Amiga!

Subscriptions

Never again miss the best in the business. Take out a subscription – you know it makes sense... ***Page 116***

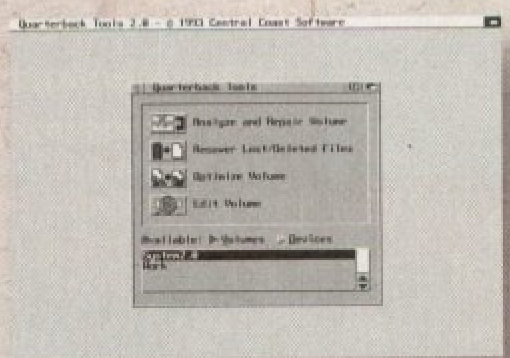


The Next Generation is Here

Quarterback Tools Deluxe

If the things you create with your Amiga are important to you, you need Quarterback Tools Deluxe. With Quarterback Tools Deluxe, you can quickly and easily recover your work should disaster strike.

Advanced Disk Recovery and Optimization

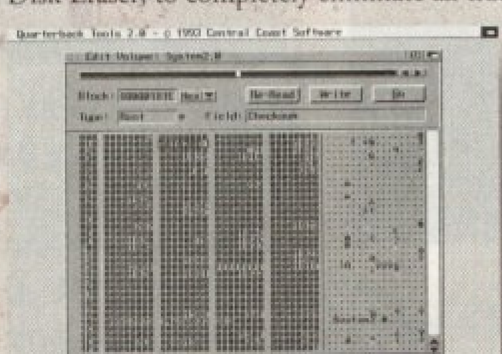


Quarterback Tools Deluxe includes the new Quarterback Tools 2.0, the most powerful data recovery tool available for the Amiga. Quarterback Tools can search for and repair just about any problem your disks may have. But Quarterback Tools goes beyond simple disk repair—with it you can restore files that have been accidentally deleted, find bad blocks on your disks and keep them from being used, and even salvage files from badly damaged disks. Quarterback Tools can also optimize the arrangement of files on your disks, speeding file access tremendously!

This new version of Quarterback Tools not only enhances these capabilities, but adds new features as well. It now includes a disk sector editor, for advanced users. With it you can directly modify the contents of any sector on your disks. There is also full support for new features of AmigaDOS 2.0 and 3.0, as well as extensive AREXX and macro support.

Powerful Disk and File Management

Quarterback Tools Deluxe includes much more then just a new version of Quarterback Tools. Numerous new utilities have been added to make maintaining your system even easier then ever. There's Replicator, a full-featured duplication system. Locator, to quickly locate your files. Encryptor, to secure your files from others. File Eraser and Disk Eraser, to completely eliminate all traces of your files. Keystroke Finder, to show you how to type special characters. System Mover, to make moving fonts and system files a snap. And Brain Cloud, which can protect your disks from accidental use by others.



Tools for Everyone

Quarterback Tools Deluxe is the most advanced disk recovery and file management package available for the Amiga, and the one program no Amiga user can afford to be without!

Call us today to find out how you can get your copy of Quarterback Tools Deluxe.

Quarterback Tools

- Scans disks for a wide range of problems and repairs them automatically.
- Finds bad blocks on a disk and hides them from AmigaDOS.
- Searches for and recovers accidentally deleted files.
- Salvages files from badly damaged disks.
- Defragments files for optimized disk performance.
- Includes an advanced disk sector editor, for direct access to data on disk.
- Full macro and AREXX support.
- Full AmigaDOS 2.0 and 3.0 compatibility, including support for both hard and soft links.

Replicator

- Quickly makes multiple copies of floppy disks.
- Creates disk images and saves as AmigaDOS files.

Locator

- Searches disks for files that partially or fully match specified names.
- Displays location of files, information about files, and file contents.

Encryptor

- Encrypts and decrypts files to prevent unauthorized access.
- File decryption is password protected.

File Eraser

- Completely erases and deletes files to make their contents unrecoverable.
- Uses standard or US Government erasure methods.

Disk Eraser

- Completely erases all traces of just deleted files, or of *all* files on a disk.
- Uses standard or US Government erasure methods.

Keystroke Finder

- Displays keystrokes necessary to generate any character.

System Mover

- Quickly and easily moves fonts, printer drivers, and system files between disks.
- Displays version information for printer drivers and system files.

Brain Cloud

- Makes a floppy disk unaccessible to AmigaDOS.
- Not even the Amiga's "Format" command will work on a disk with a "Brain Cloud"!

General

- Workbench 2.0 style "3-D" user interface.
- Requires Kickstart 1.2 or later (Kickstart 2.0 or later recommended).

Central Coast Software
A Division of New Horizons Software, Inc.
206 Wild Basin Rd., Suite 109
Austin, Texas 78746

(512) 328-6650

NEWS

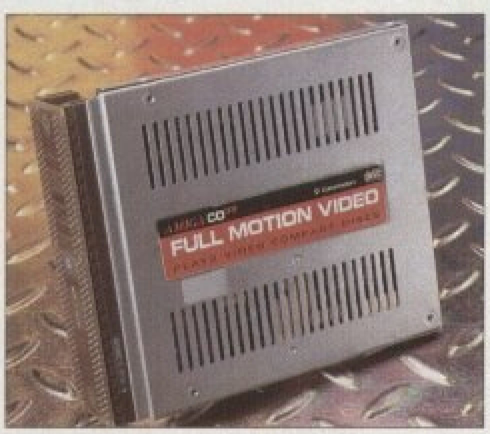
by John Butters

Games give CD32 sales a boost

AN IMPROVED CD32 pack containing extra games and full-motion video clips hit the High Street during the last few Christmas shopping days.

The move was made by Commodore in an attempt to pick up extra Christmas sales, after a games shortage and poor market conditions led to a disappointing start to the machine's life.

The manufacturer are confident they will have achieved 75,000 sales in Britain by the end of last year – around a third of the original projection made at launch.



FMV: Running video CD within weeks

But the company are pleased with the console's performance so far, and claim it is substantially outselling its Sega Mega CD competitor.

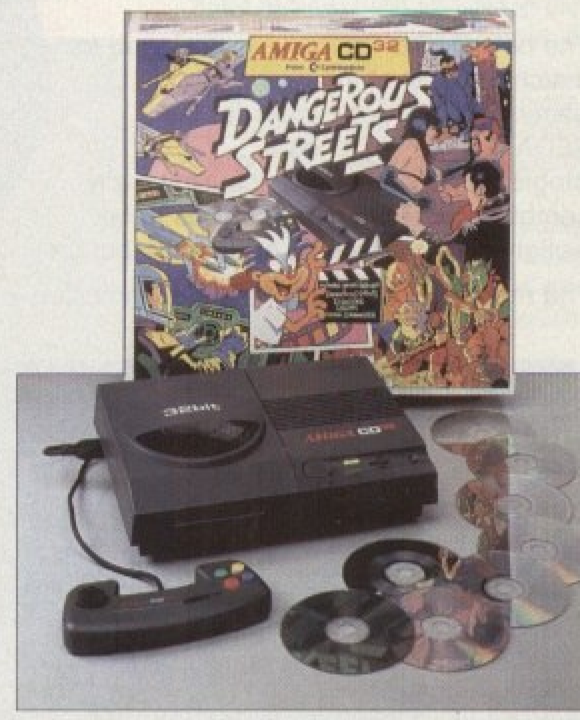
The Dangerous Streets bundle comes with new titles Dangerous Streets and Wing Commander in addition to Diggers and Oscar which have been supplied with the console since launch.

Micro-Value Flair's Dangerous Streets is a beat-'em-up featuring eight exotic combatants from across the globe and Wing Commander is an improved version of Electronic Arts' flight sim.

Commodore say that if bought individually the four games would cost £120, but despite this they have been able to maintain the machine's original £299 price tag.

Video clips included in the pack are aimed as a "stunning" demonstration of the console's full motion video capability when fitted with the video CD module.

As we went to print the device was promised for imminent availability at £199, and first compact disc films including *Top Gun* and *Star Trek* are expected within the next couple of months.



Dangerous Streets: More CD games, same price

The pack also contains demos of the Amiga CD32's existing motion video system CDXL and previews of games on the way for the machine.

Report clears video games

PLAYING video games very rarely triggers epileptic seizures in people without a known history of epilepsy.

That's the finding of a Government-funded report just published following a national study led by Dr David Fish of the National Society for Epilepsy.

It reveals that people who suffer seizures for the first time while playing video games are photo-sensitive – in other words they are susceptible to flashing light.

The report says of the 30,000 Britons who suffer their first seizure each year, 600 are definitely at risk from epilepsy attacks triggered by TV, video games and other light sources.

Up to 150 people each year may have their first seizure brought on by playing a video game, although there is no evidence that photo-sensitivity can actually be caused by the games.

Most newly diagnosed photo-sensitive epileptics are between seven and 19 years old, it adds.

Consumer Affairs Minister Lord Strathclyde said: "This report shows that photosensitive epilepsy affects a very small number of people.

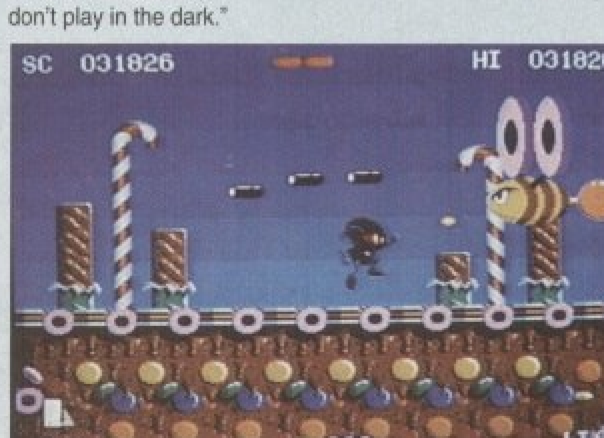
"A much smaller number suffer their first seizure while playing video games – roughly the same as through watching television.

"People who suffer must always seek medical advice and those with known epilepsy should ask their doctor whether they are at risk from seizures triggered by video games."

Some computer games makers have recently been putting warnings on the outside of their packaging advising players how to avoid health problems.

The industry watchdog ELSPA's general secretary Roger Bennett said: "There are certain issues that are important regardless of whether the player suffers from epilepsy."

"Don't sit too close to the monitor, don't play for too long and don't play in the dark."



Games: Government give epilepsy all-clear

Video graphics prices slashed

THIRTY-TWO bit video graphics board Harlequin and paint package TV Paint 2 have had massive price cuts by specialist Amiga Centre Scotland (089 687 583).

The move puts the products into a category that makes them affordable to semi-professionals and keen video amateurs.

Harlequin sees cuts of around £230 across the range, while the TV Paint 2 has had its price tag slashed by £450 to £249. When bought together even bigger savings are available.

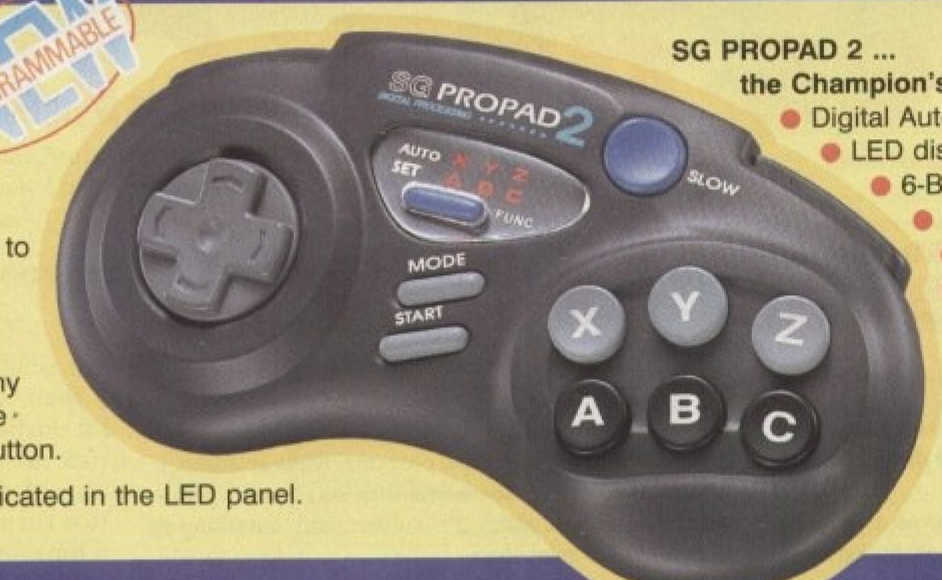
ACS boss Martin Lowe said the prices had been cut for several reasons: "On the one hand we've got a much better [trade] price on TV Paint," he said.

"On the other hand we've managed to cut Harlequin's price because we've now recovered our development costs."

QJ Controllers

Leaders of the Pack....

Looks to Kill....



The new QJ SG ProPad 2 is designed to match the best of the new generation of video games for the SEGA Megadrive. It has a programmable feature which allows any combination of fire button moves to be assigned to a single left or right fire button.

The recorded combinations are all indicated in the LED panel.

SG PROPAD 2 ...
the Champion's companion.

- Digital Autofire setting
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- Programmable 'syncro-fire'
- Slow-motion function
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- Mirror function doubles number of pre-programmed moves
- LCD control panel to display action sequences
- Independent autofire control
- Slow motion
- See-thru casing.

SNES VERSION
SV 337
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SEGA VERSION
SV 437
£39.99 inc. VAT.





PROGRAM STICK

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- 6 memory spaces to program your own combinations
- Mirror function doubles number of pre-programmed moves
- LCD control panel to display action sequences
- Built-in backup battery for memory storage
- Independent autofire control
- Variable slow motion
- Rotatable fire button pad.

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News Briefs

CD problem

THE external CD drive under development to enable A1200s to use compact disc software designed for the CD32 could be scrapped, *Amiga Computing* has learned.

Commodore are having difficulty giving the drive full motion video capability which they consider essential before it can be released.

Monitor shortage

AMIGA buyers were hit by a monitor shortage on the run up to Christmas, with most computer stores selling out early in the peak selling period.

The problem was caused by Philips withdrawing their top-selling CM8833-II during autumn and Commodore temporarily halting production of the 1084S colour screen.

Commodore boss David Pleasance expected monitors to be available within the next few weeks and said it was necessary for the firm to put all resources into the A1200 and CD32.

Unfaithful sex games

AN ISRAELI man wants to divorce his "unfaithful" wife because of her use of filthy computer games, according to online magazine *STReport*.

The unnamed man is claimed to have told a Tel Aviv rabbinical court that his wife cheats on him in her thoughts by playing the games, making her a theoretical adulteress.

He said there is no difference between a woman who has a physical relationship with other men and one who imagines it.

Linking up

AN ADAPTOR to enable Great Valley Products' EGS-28/24 Spectrum graphics board to be used with NEC's FG series of monitors is now available.

The device does not affect the graphic quality provided by the EGS Spectrum, and is available from Silica Systems (081-309 1111). Price remains to be fixed, but is expected to be under £25.

Drive locks out viruses

AN EXTERNAL floppy disk drive featuring anti-virus protection has just been added to Amitek's Friendly Technology range of Amiga peripherals.

The 1Mb drive has an enable/disable switch, a daisy chain connector and a Sony mechanism using anti-click technology. It is housed in a metal casing and comes with a two-year warranty.

"Rather than just offer a dull Amiga drive, we wanted to offer Amiga users something better but still keep the price very competitive," said Amitek spokesman Andy Leaning.

"We could have made just another Amiga drive, but we went to the time and trouble to find what specifications users wanted."

Silica Systems are selling the drive for £59, and can be telephoned on 081-309 1111.



Amitek: Found which specifications drive buyers wanted

Consoles grow into computers

CD32 owners will soon be able to build their console into an A1200-compatible computer using a new expansion device from US peripheral manufacturer Microbotics.

The £149.99 SX1 slots into the machine to allow a keyboard, floppy disk drive, printer and up to 6Mb of fast access memory to be added.

British dealer Calculus Stores (0543 251275) are also selling it in a bundle with CD32 and four games, a keyboard, Panasonic 2123 colour printer and Zappo floppy disk drive for £499.99.

And for existing CD32 owners buing the module Calculus will sell the peripherals separately – the ke board costing £49.99 and floppy drive£54.99.

Each of the products is also available from the firm's mail order sister company, Indi Direct Mail (0543 419999), with discounting.

Museum takes CD32 in £4m facelift

A STATE-of-the-art information system based on £299 CD32 games consoles has just been installed at the London Transport Museum as part of a £4 million facelift.

More than 100 of the machines are used to provide interactive information, video, animations and sound effects.

They are linked using an expansion system developed by Index Information, the Hampshire-based firm which chose Commodore's machine for the displays.

A master machine controls the volume of sound effects around the museum and identifies and reports on problems found over the network.

Visitors use touch screens to discover facts on London's transport system, its vehicles and the effects it has had on the city and Londoners since 1800.

Each display is hooked up to a CD32 player which has been rack mounted and hidden from general view.

"Many of the qualities that will make the CD32 such a successful home entertainment system also make it the ideal commercial multimedia player," said the Index's Mike Tinker.

"A high quality and low cost delivery unit combined with a powerful development platform is allowing us to provide advanced displays at much lower costs than competitive systems."

Material is stored on 60 compact discs and took almost two years to develop using A4000s.

Faster compression for Quarterback

HARD disk backup and archiving utility Quarterback has been upgraded again, this time with faster compression and the ability to automate backups at set times.

Schedule Pro, included with v6 of US-based Central Coast Software's program, enables users to schedule and automatically run any Amiga program.

It can display reminders on the screen at preset times and, as with the program execution feature, can be set for single or repeated occurrences.

Quarterback also operates much faster than before, with its makers claiming it can compress data read from a hard disk as fast as it can write it to a floppy.

The new version also has support for advanced tape-handling features for tape drivers which support them, including fast searching and quick erasing of tapes. Several new commands give the user more control in automating the program's features and customising it to their preferences.

"Quarterback 6 adds the features that advanced users have been asking for," said Central Coast boss James Bayeless.

"We've added support for advanced features present in the newest high-capacity tapes drives, as well as faster compression and the ability to backup a large hard disk across multiple tapes."

The package costs £79.95 from Meridian Distribution (081-543 3500). Existing owners of the software should contact the firm for upgrade details which weren't available at press time.

Greater graphics control

MUTLIFRAME-ADPro is a front end for graphics programs Art Department Professional and Morph Plus that aims to give users greater control over multiple frame processing.

Premier Vision (071-274 4407) claim it to be ideal for creating effects with a large number of images for multimedia applications or output to video.

Its features include the ability to process images over time, with the user giving starting and ending values and the separation being the number of frames needed from the software.

Non-linear motion is available using true splines with adjustable knots, tension, continuity and bias, and fly-ins of moving images are possible using a perspective operator.

Multiple frame/ripples, automatic compositing of foreground images over background and scaling of images during processing are among the £69.95 program's other capabilities.

Free online guide

MODEM manufacturer US Robotics have published a free booklet aimed at stimulating increased use of the range of on-line information services available.

The Sportster Guide to On-line Services gives details of the various services which can be accessed using a modem, including several small bulletin boards.

The 40-page guide can be obtained by writing to Sally Roberts, US Robotics, 224 Berwick Avenue, Slough SL1 4QT, or telephoning 0753 811180.

Virgin fund football training



Virgin: Hand over £47,000 cheque to improve UK football

VIRGIN Interactive Entertainment have sponsored a scheme to teach Britain's kids how to become skilful football players just weeks after England failed to qualify for the World Cup.

The company – publisher of football hit Goal! – handed over a £47,000 cheque recently to the co-ordinator of the Virgin Games Schools Football Initiative at Arsenal's Highbury ground.

The scheme enables schools to use a Dutch method of coaching called Coerver which uses one ball, one-player training instead of the more common 11-players, one ball.

Children of all ages can take part, and after their schools have signed up are asked to find extra sponsorship from friends and family to fund sports equipment needed for the training. Of the money used to set up the scheme, Virgin and the Government each donated £20,000, and £7,000 came from other sponsors, including Adidas and a football magazine *Shoot!*.

"The sponsorship deal could not have come at a more opportune time following England's failure to qualify for the World Cup," said Virgin's marketing manager Paul Dowling.

"Not only does the scheme encourage kids to learn individual football skills, but it will also give Virgin Interactive Entertainment direct access to around 25,000 UK schools."

Activa come to Britain

ACTIVA, the Dutch maker of ray-tracing and animation software Real 3D2, have opened a British office to give owners of the program free technical support.

Based in London, it is run by a professional games artist Andrew Jones, who also does work for Electronics Arts and was involved in testing the Activa package.

Distribution of the program continues through various dealers but according to Jones the company are planning to open a UK division to handle the product early this year.

Real 3D2 owners needed help and advice should telephone 081-402 5770 between 10am and 7pm on Monday to Fridays or fax to 081-402 5780.

Alternatively, modem owners can contact the Activa UK Support BBS on 081-986 5964 or via netmail at 2:254/516.1@fidonet.

It has support, message areas, program updates and files for TV Paint, Real 3D Classic and v2, Mediapoint, Piccolo, Peggy and Detail 3.

Application building

MULTIMEDIA software can now be designed for the Amiga using Helm, Eagle Tree Software's authoring system which is available in Britain from Meridian Software (081-543 3500).

The package combines draw, paint and image processing tools with a scripting language, a database manager and an assortment of user interface objects.

Meridian claim the software enables users to build applications quickly that freely mix graphics, animation, text and music. It costs £99.95.

Direct input for CD sounds

MAESTRO Professional is a sound board providing Amigas with digital 16-bit input and output for compact disc-quality sound and direct-to-hard disk recording.

It is believed to be the first card to take a direct digital signal rather than digitised or sampled input.

Developed by MacroSystem, it comes with Samplitude software and, using an optional back-up program and a DAT recorder, can be used to back up to 2Gb of hard disk storage.

Distributor Amiga Centre Scotland (089 687 583) say the software is a "good sound editing package which provides all the functionality that one expects from such software". "I captured 40 minutes of CD-quality sound direct across the optical link without any problems at all," said Mick Tinker at Index Information – see London museum story this month, "the data is in the correct layout for use on a CD without modification."

Toccata, meanwhile, is aimed as a high quality, low cost solution for Amiga owners who want to record 16-bit samples direct to hard disk at up to 48kHz.

It features three stereo inputs, stereo output, 64 times oversampling and comes with the same Samplitude software as supplied with Maestro Professional.

Maestro Professional costs £612 and fits into the Zorro II slot of top-end Amigas and Toccata costs £370.

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European Computer Trade Show
Venue: Business Design Centre, London
Organiser: Blenheim On-line
(081-742 2828)
Europe's largest trade show for the computer and video games industry.

April 16, 1994
Spring All Micro Show
Venue: Bingley Hall, Staffs
Organiser: Sharward Services
(0473 272002)
Last autumn's show contained 70 exhibitors – some with Amiga software and hardware.

September 20-25, 1994
Live '94
Venue: Earls Court
Organiser: News International
(071-782 6893)
Commodore have already pledged their support for this large consumer electronics show.

October 6-9, 1994
BBC Big Bash
Venue: NEC, Birmingham
Organiser: Haymarket Exhibitions
Future World area of this big show will contain the latest computer games and virtual reality.

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Overseas

March 16-23, 1994
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Venue: Hanover, Germany
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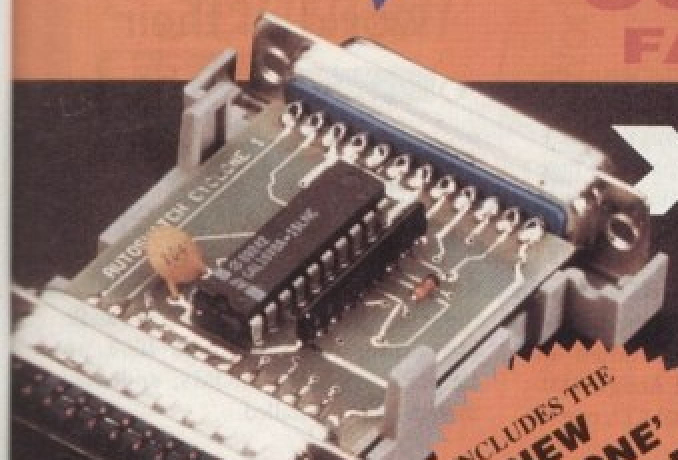
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The show goes on

Denny Atkin sees Commodore in a world of their own as they hack a path through a difficult winter

The third North American World of Commodore show of 1993 was held in early December in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. This show marked the first time that CD32 was actually available for sale in North America, with a small shipment of NTSC units having been built just for the show.

As this article was set to go to Press, Commodore were planning their US nationwide of CD32 at the January Las Vegas CES show. The unit has been getting very good previews in the computer game magazines over here, but there's a lot of concern about whether European companies are going to bother with NTSC support for their games, since almost nobody in the States is developing CD32 titles.

Commodore had some impressive full-motion video demos using the Mpeg module on display. The *Star Trek VI* demo was exciting, but far more impressive was the European TV commercial shown in both Mpeg and CDXL formats — it was the first time most North Americans had seen a Commodore TV commercial since William Shatner was pushing Vic-20s and C64s in the early 1980s.

Except for CD32 titles, there was very little new at the show. Soft-Logik were showing the latest Alpha of PageStream 3.0, which is poised to become a Quark and PageMaker killer. GVP's new offering was a new version of ImageFX designed specifically for EGS video boards; there was also talk of a 33MHz 68040 accelerator for the Amiga 4000.

Digital Creations showed Brilliance 2.0 (the upgrade that was going to be 1.1 got a little bigger). Among the new features are rub-through, the ability to save tween settings, and new animation controls.

The Emplant and A-Max IV Macintosh emulators were on display virtually across the aisle from each other. After seeing the methods that A-Max IV uses to multitask Macintosh software with Amiga applications, Emplant's Jim Drew posted a note to the nets that he didn't think he was going to have to sue Readysoft after all – apparently they use a different method.

On the last day of the show Drew had Emplant running as fast as the fastest Macs, thanks to having installed an Excalibur accelerator in his Amiga 4000. One interesting titbit was that CEI, one of Commodore's North American distributors, were going to release a $2995 bundle containing a 10Mb Amiga 4000, an Emplant with Mac ROMs, and Mac System 7.1 pre-installed.

The end of the world as we know it?

At one of the keynote speeches, Commodore's Lew Eggebrecht talked about a technically exciting future for Commodore that may have dark overtones for the future of the Amiga as we know it.

In the near future we'll see a cost-reduced Amiga 4000 and (finally) CD32-compatible external CD-ROM drives for the A1200 and A4000 (apparently these drives have already been designed, but were sent back to be cost-reduced since they'd cost about as much as a CD32).

Also, Commodore have finally reached an agreement with Kodak and Philips and PhotoCD support is on the way for Amiga CD.

Eggebrecht said the AAA chip set is coming along nicely, and the company expected the next iteration of prototype chips to be completed in January. Depending on how bug-free those chips are, the new chipset could be nearing production (it's about time, too – I recently saw a proposal for the AAA chips that was dated April-1990!).

He said that 24-bit images were being blitted about the screen at speeds faster than the AGA chips can move Ham-8 graphics.

The good news is that Eggebrecht said that Commodore are planning to use Motorola's blazing-fast Motorola 68060 chip in a future Amiga.

This should make for an incredibly speedy machine that will run the majority of current Amiga software. No dates were given for the release of AAA or 68060 machines, although Fall 1994 was hinted for AAA.

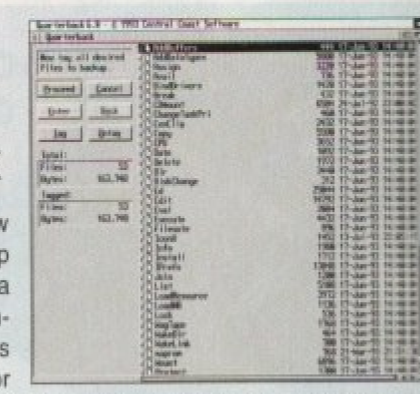
Eggebrecht also mentioned that some future machines would use the industry-standard PCI expansion bus in addition to Zorro III; a modular architecture would allow you to "upgrade" your 68060/PCI Amiga to use a RISC processor.

The disturbing news, though, was Commodore's plans for the future shift to RISC processors. This in itself isn't upsetting, as the computer industry as a whole is taking this RISCy tack. But Eggebrecht said that Commodore would not be porting the Amiga operating system to run on their RISC machines, but that instead the company would use an "industry-standard" operating system (presumably Windows NT or something similar).

Eggebrecht stated that the Amiga OS would only be available on the 680x0 series. Sorry, Lew, but AAA chips or not, a machine that won't run Amiga software or the Amiga's spectacular operating system isn't an Amiga anymore.

Hopefully Commodore will wise up and offer an Amiga OS-compatibility mode, similar to the methods Apple use to allow their new Power PC Macintoshes to run 680x0 Mac software.

Six points for the Quarterback



Central Coast Software announced a new version of their popular hard-disk backup program, Quarterback. Version 6.0 adds a number of new features that will make owners of high-speed SCSI tape-backup drives happy, but there are also new features for those of us who are a little less wealthy and back up our hard drives onto 100 floppy disks.

Faster software-based compression means that you can now compress backups to floppy disks with no slowdown as compared to uncompressed backups, a real boon to owners of slower Amigas. A new backup scheduler lets you schedule automatic tape backups – or any Amiga program – to execute at any defined time.

Quarterback 6.0 now supports backing up a drive to multiple tapes, and will take advantage of advanced features in new high-capacity tape drives. Several new ARexx commands give more control over automating your backups.

The product retails for $99.95; Quarterback 5.0 will continue to be available for $75. For upgrade information, contact Central Coast Software, PO Box 164287, Austin, TX 78716; phone (512) 328-6650; fax (512) 328-1925.

Commodore and HP on TV

The hot technology here in the US is the set-top box, which is the unexciting name for high-tech cable TV boxes that will let you view 500 cable channels and make television truly interactive.

Although companies like 3DO and Microsoft have already jumped into the lead by signing with the cable-TV big guys, a report in an industry trade magazine says that Hewlett-Packard has thrown its hat into the cable TV ring and has looked for Commodore for help.

Apparently HP has licensed the Amiga CD32 architecture (*sans* CD-ROM drive) as the basis for its set-top box. If major cable companies pick up the HP/Commodore offering (which apparently has a price advantage over many of its competitors), it could mean a nice cash-infusion for financially strapped Commodore.

So much for promises



As a plague of amnesia sweeps the software industry, we ask if piracy is any worse than profiteering

Before I too become tainted by a mysterious memory disorder that's affected many of those present at the summer launch of the CD32, it's worth attempting to restore at least something for those poor unfortunates who've been hit hardest by this mystery disease.

Although closely investigated, the disease's cause still remains a mystery. However, the search has been narrowed down to that great day when Commodore's new baby took its first step into the open arms of the press and industry bigwigs.

Could it have been the filled rolls strewn across the running buffet? Maybe the bucks fizz held some strange water-borne infection? Who knows for sure?

Fortunately most of the Amiga press have an insatiable need for free lager, and were therefore saved. Unfortunately the Armani set weren't so lucky, guzzling down the dubious orange liquor with gay abandon.

If only the forgetful throng could recall the words of David Pleasance as he drew cheers from the assorted suits by denouncing piracy while singing the praises of CD32 and its pirate-proof design.

Even the prospect of paying a small fee to use Commodore's proprietary CD boot code didn't phase the now deliriously happy software developers – who by this time were openly salivating at the prospect of finally rogering the pirates.

Mr Pleasance went on working the crowd by explaining that even though there are approximately two million Amigas in the UK, a hit game still only sells a pathetic 30,000 copies – more mumbled approval...

At this point, the rhetoric changed tack in the direction of the poor punters who, thanks to the CD32, will enjoy unrivalled value for money as the software houses find themselves liberated from the scourge of the seafaring marauders. Unfortunately it appears this part of the proceedings was worst affected by this mysterious disease. Mr Pleasance followed up with hand on heart claims that CD32 wasn't to be another CDTV turkey stuffed with rehashed non-AGA software at inflated prices.

Mention this particular element to the average software executive and you'll hear your words bouncing around the void left by the bucks fizz. To be fair not all were affected and indeed some have rallied around the CD32 flag with the odd dedicated release which at least begins to exploit the power of the machine.

Unfortunately for the vast majority the temptation to box shift old software has been just too much to bear. As a result many a pensionable program is now being revitalised – but alas not re-written.

Not necessarily a bad thing, I mean what's wrong with a collection of classic programs stuffed onto the near limitless storage space of a CD and sold on to the eager public at a reasonable price? Nothing at all!

Unfortunately, it appears this is the last thing on the mind of those at the top. Rather than 10, 20 or perhaps 300 programs, the average release holds no more than the original floppy.

Worse still, many are simply dumped across, bypassing the AGA potential of the CD32 entirely. Of course there's always the cost of development to consider, which is a very valid point – if you're actually developing something new.

And let's not forget the part which the pirates have played in the equation. Thanks to them we've all been forced to pay ever-increasing sums for software, but now that's all behind us – isn't it?

After all, that's what the software industry has been telling us for years –"it's their fault, we're only trying to keep our heads above the water, every program pirated means less for development..."

But nobody can rip off a CD32 release, so why aren't prices tumbling instead of creeping ever closer to those of Sega and Nintendo? Before gold fever reaches epidemic proportions and joins forces with amnesia it's perhaps worth remembering who pays the bill. Otherwise these temporary disorders may become terminal for the software houses and the Amiga itself. Although I'm not against anyone trying to recoup their losses, there has to be a limit, and given the fact that all the major software houses have had access to CD32 development systems for over a year, there's no excuse for research and development to go on for ever.

In short, let's not sell the CD32 down the river. After all, why should cash-crazed marketing men bugger it up for Commodore and indeed the rest of us?

Paul Austin
Associate Editor

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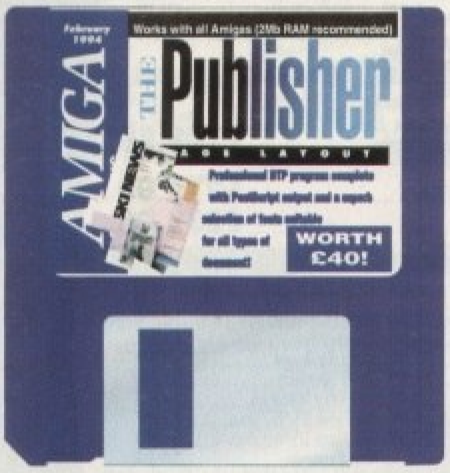
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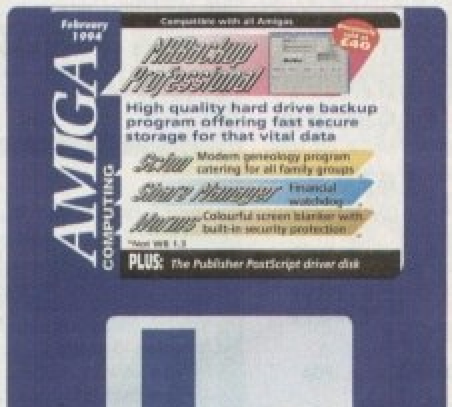
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the DISK

Power of the

The Publisher is a complete DTP package comprising of three disks which we've crammed onto this month's CoverDisks, all of which will have to be unarchived before we can go any further.

As usual, the de-archiving process is launched by booting from the CoverDisk and double clicking the Make icons, so do this now.

There are two archives on the main Publisher disk, one each for the program disk and the fonts disk, and one on the MRBackup disk which contains the PostScript interpreter program, so you'll need three blank floppies.

The Publisher can be installed either on hard drive or on floppies. In the latter case, if running from floppies you will need to have a second drive attached to the Amiga so that The Publisher can read its fonts disk.

FLOPPY DISK INSTALLATION

As we have already have a backup of The Publisher in the form of the original CoverDisks, there's really no need to install the program disk to floppies as this has already been done, but there are some things we have to do.

Place the fonts disk in your second drive, making sure it is write-enabled, then double click on the disk icon and the Publisher_Fonts directory until you see an icon called Font_Install.

Now double click on this icon and there will be a bit of disk whirring, during which time the install program will create a list of the available fonts and save the list to the disk.

Installing the PostScript interpreter is a little more complex. Again, make sure you have booted from Workbench, then format two blank disks, calling them PS_Driver1 and PS_Driver2 respectively.

Now place the de-archived PostScript interpreter disk in df0: and the PS_Driver1 disk in your second drive. Open both disk windows and drag all eight icons from the interpreter disk to PS_Driver1. Replace the interpreter disk with your Workbench disk in df0: and make sure it is write enabled. Now double click on the Publisher_Script icon which should be on the new PS_Driver1 disk.

Two icons should appear, so double click on the PS_Install icon and type the number 6547495F into the requester when asked for your serial number.

Now double click on the PS_VM drawer in the PS_Driver1 window. Double click on VM_Install and you should see a confirmation appear. Now remove this disk and write protect it, then replace the Workbench disk in df0: with the de-archived interpreter disk. Place the second formatted disk (the one we called PS_Driver2) in your second drive.

Open the PS_Driver2 window by double clicking on the disk icon, then double click on the Publisher_Script icon in df0: and drag the icons called PS_DLPs and PSC_Buffer over to your PS_Driver2 disk. Now remove the original interpreter disk and store it in a safe place.

Put your Workbench disk in df0: making sure it is write-protected, then double click on the PS_DLPs drawer icon, then on the DLP_Install icon. Click on OK once the program has confirmed installation.

Again, double click on the PSC_Buffer drawer icon, then double click the Buf_Install icon, clicking ok when the program reports a successful installation.

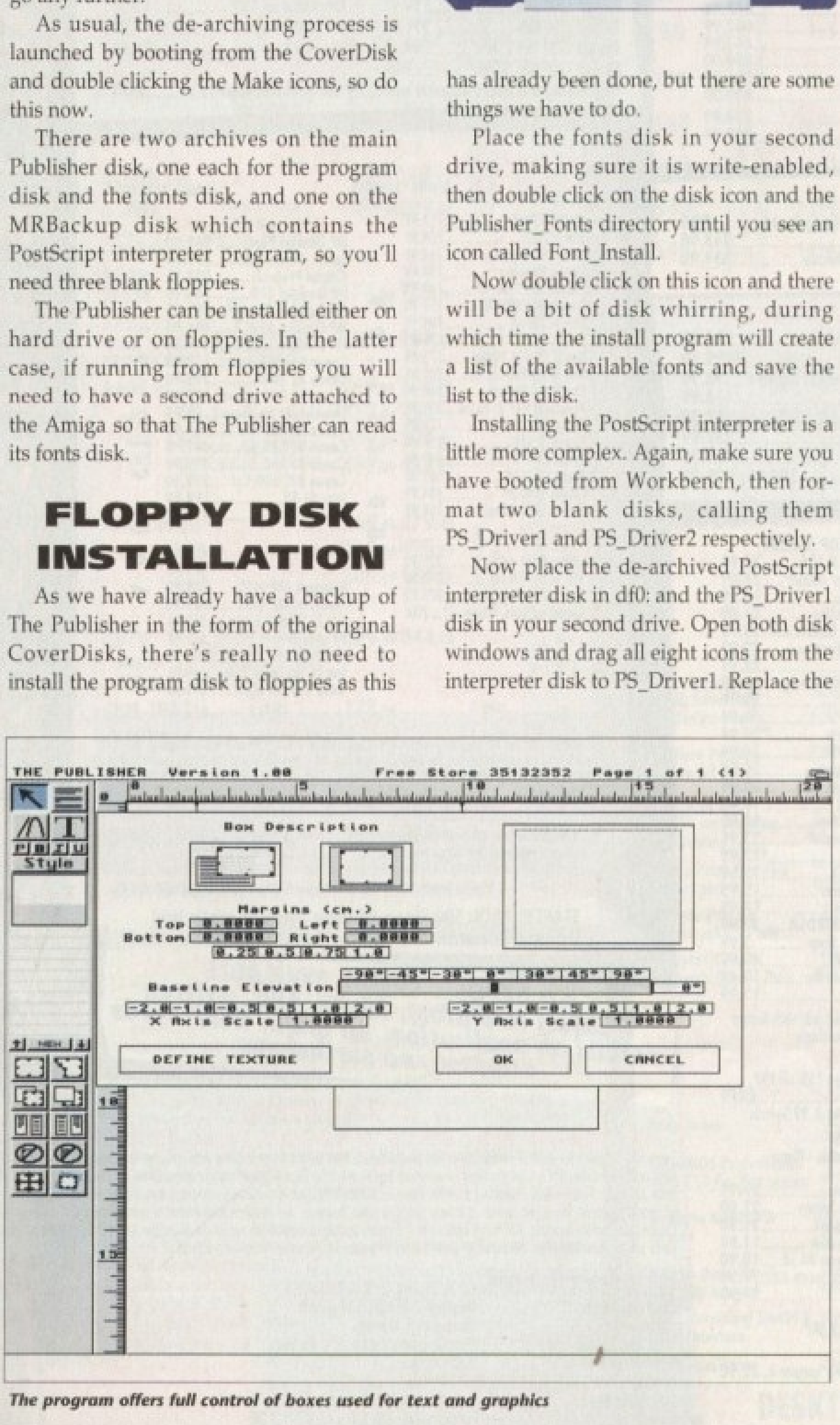
Your second interpreter disk is now safely installed and you should keep it with the PS_Driver1 disk for when you print your documents. For setting up the interpreter, refer to the appropriate section later on.

HARD DRIVE INSTALLATION

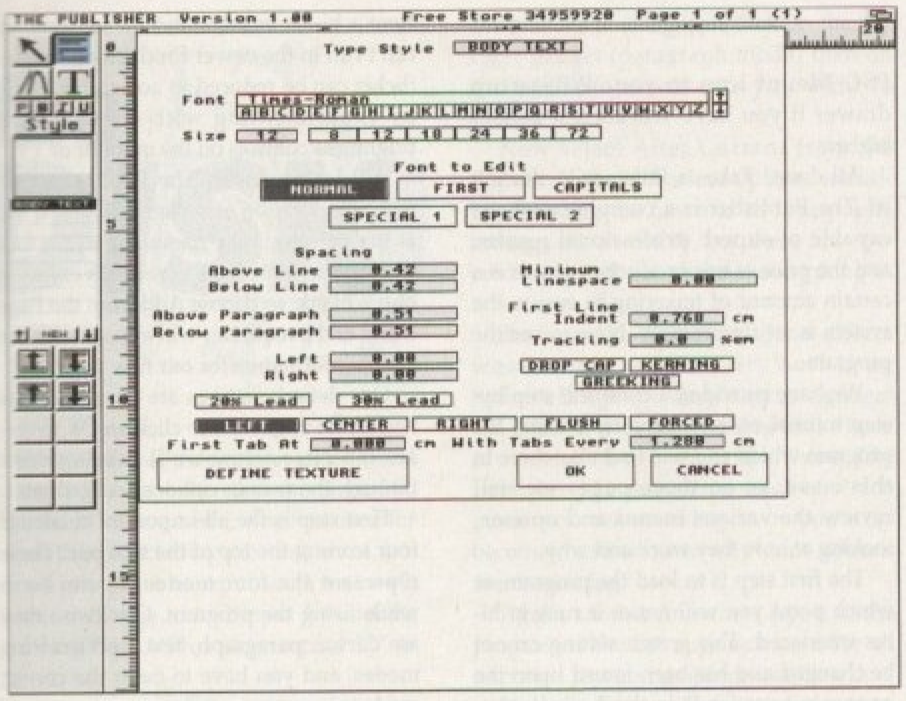
Boot from hard drive and insert the de-archived fonts disk in df0:, then open the hard drive window where The Publisher is to be installed. Double click on the fonts disk icon, then drag the Publisher_Fonts drawer across to the target hard drive.

Once disk activity has ceased, remove the floppy, open the Publisher_Fonts drawer just created on your hard drive and double click the Font_Install icon, which will scan for available fonts and create a list which it will save on hard drive. Now put your original fonts disk away in a safe place.

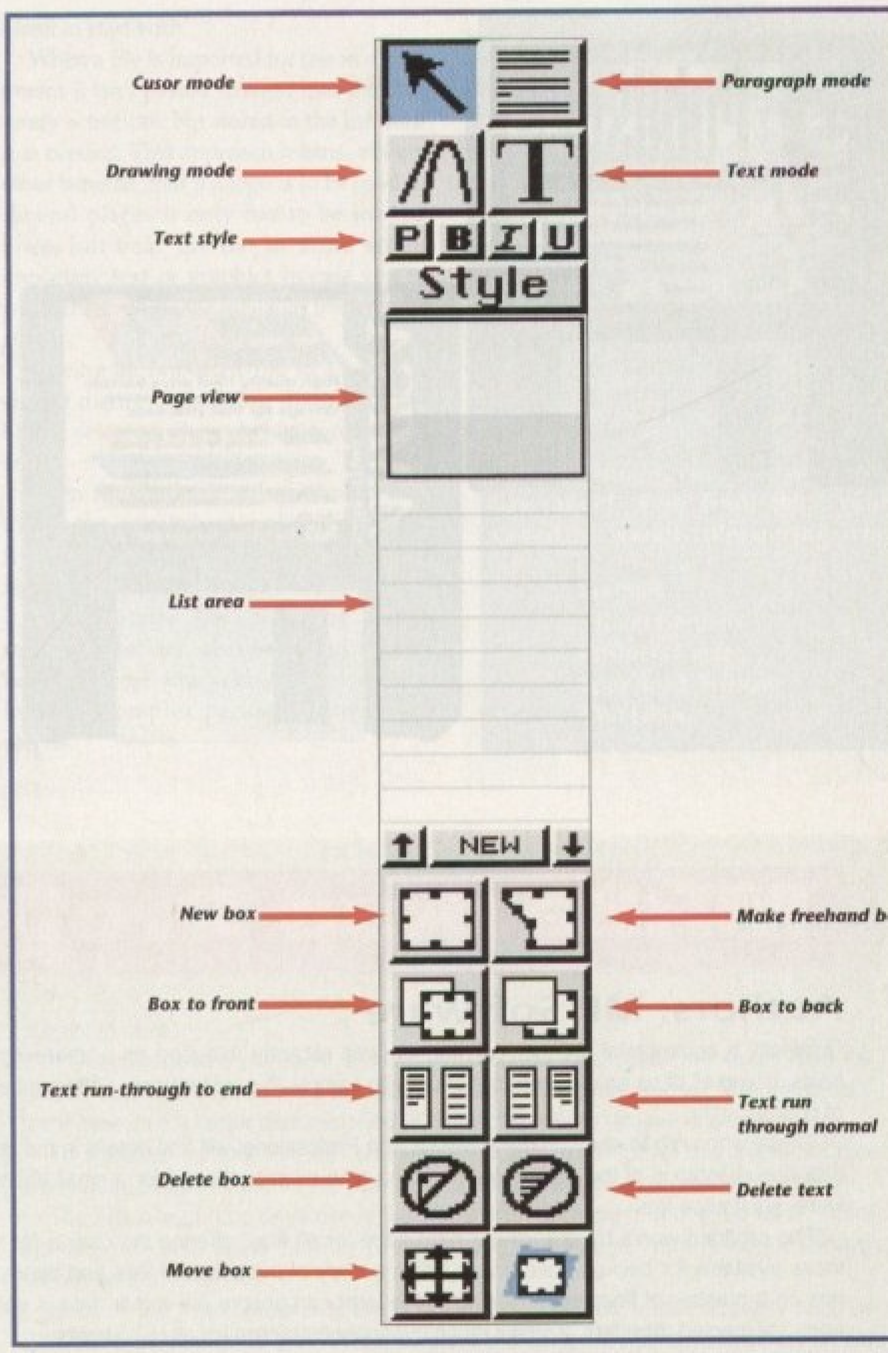
To install the program itself, place the de-archived program disk in df0:, double click on the disk icon and drag The_Publisher drawer across to the target hard drive. Again, once disk activity has ceased, remove the floppy and open the



The program offers full control of boxes used for text and graphics



As many text style options as one could wish for through the Type Style menu



Getting into print in professional style has never been easier than with this month's superb DTP giveaway, The Publisher

press

drawer just created on your hard drive.

A similar icon will appear which is The_Publisher program icon itself, so double click on this to run the program, and when prompted to enter a serial number, type 6547495F and press Return. The Publisher will initialise itself and run, but for now choose the Quit option from the Document menu.

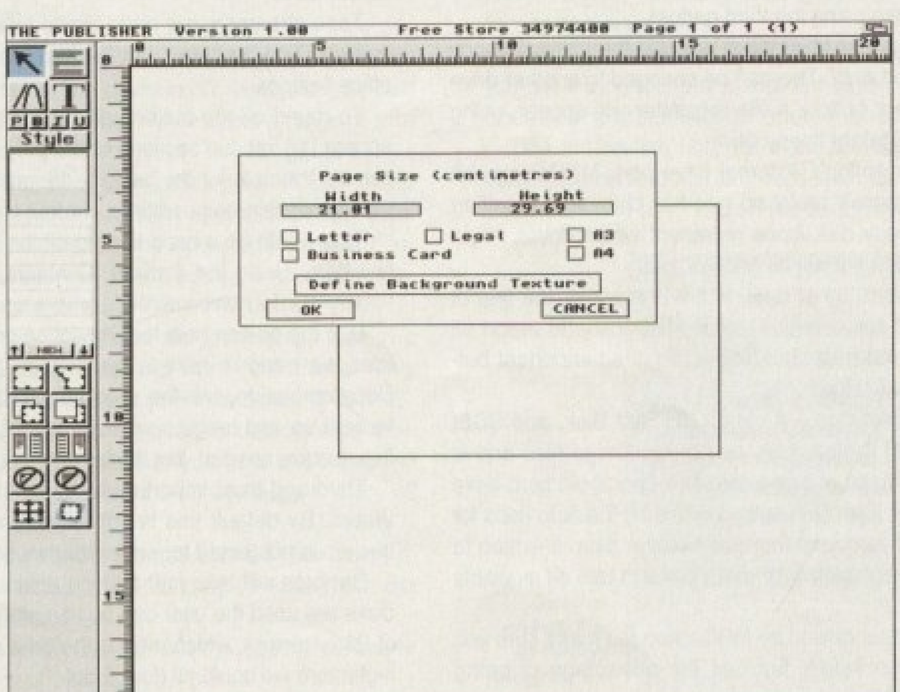
We now need to install the PostScript interpreter. Insert the de-archived interpreter disk in df0: and open the hard drive window in which you wish to install the interpreter program.

Now double click on the interpreter disk icon to reveal eight icons, all of which should be dragged across to the hard drive drawer you have chosen (it would be a good idea to create a new drawer for this part of the installation).

Remove the original disk from df0: then double click on the Publisher_Script drawer icon which you have just dragged across to hard drive. Two icons will appear, so double click the PS_Install icon and enter the serial number 6547495F as before and press Return.

Now go back to the main directory where the eight icons are stored and open the PS_VM, PSC_Buffer, and PS_DLPs drawer icons in turn and run the install program which can be found in each drawer. Each time, a window will appear to confirm the installation which you can close by clicking on OK.

The interpreter is now installed on hard drive and you should refer to the panel on setting up the interpreter before going any further.



Setting up a page using the Add command and page definition window

INTERPRETER SET-UP

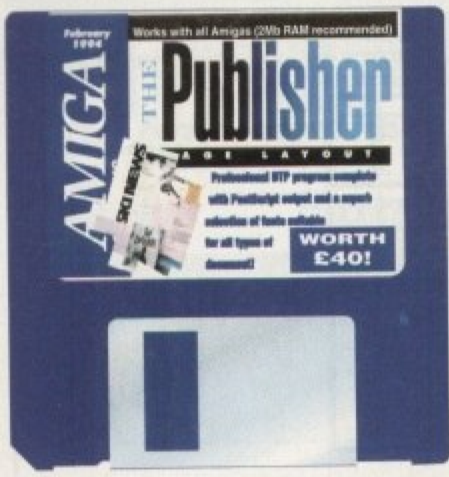
Once installed, the PostScript interpreter program must be set up to match your system resources. If you have installed to floppies, insert the PS_Driver1 disk in df0: and double click on it to reveal the contents, and if you have installed on hard drive open the directory in which you installed the interpreter.

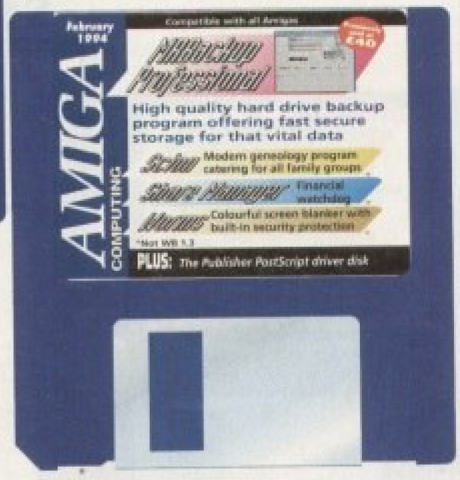
Double click on the icon called PS_Prefs which will open a program window in which we can set default buffer sizes. The interpreter program uses a sophisticated virtual memory routine to minimise the amount of RAM needed to handle PostScript files, which would otherwise by 4Mb or 5Mb, and this space is set aside on your floppy or hard drive when the interpreter is running.

For now, leave the defaults as they are, which should be 400k. There will be enough space on most hard drives and on the floppy for this buffer, so leave well alone for now and choose the Save button to save our preference settings.

Depending on the amount of hard drive space or system memory you have you can raise these defaults later, but they should do for now.

As The Publisher prints to a device known as PSC:, you must first mount the device before using the interpreter. This can be done either by double clicking the PSC_Mount icon every time you want to use the interpreter, or by dragging the ➤





PSC_Mount icon to your WBStartup drawer if you have Workbench 2.04 or higher.

All done? Takes a little while, doesn't it? The Publisher is a complex package capable of superb professional results, and the price of this productive power is a certain amount of tinkering to ensure the system is set up properly. Now to use the program...

We have provided a complete step-by-step tutorial on creating a flyer using the program which you will find elsewhere in this issue, so on these pages we will review the various menus and options, looking at how they work and why.

The first step is to load the program, at which point you will notice it runs in hi-res interlaced. This screen setting cannot be changed and has been forced upon the program because it is the best display mode for detailed DTP work. If you don't have a hi-res monitor and flicker fixer, or can't run in the newer Productivity mode, flicker can be reduced to acceptable levels by experimenting with contrast and brightness controls on the monitor or TV.

All documents in The Publisher start with the addition of a page. All you'll see at the present is the menu bar and a tool box on the left of the screen. Everything else is blank, so choose Add from the Page menu and a requester will appear with the set-up information for our new page.

Our default settings are in centimetres and an A4 page size, so click on OK to create the page. Now we'll take a whizz through the various options and gadgets.

First stop is the all-important cluster of four icons at the top of the tool box. These represent the four modes we can be in while using the program. Clockwise they are cursor, paragraph, text, and drawing modes, and you have to be in the correct mode to carry out certain operations.

Let's start by creating a box. Click on

MRBackup Professional

Authors: MR Software

Originally a commercial product, MRBackup was recently released on a shareware basis, giving all of us an excellent opportunity to sample this professional software free of charge.

Those who wish to carry on using MRBackup Professional will find details in the on-disk documentation of the company's offer of a manual in exchange for a small shareware registration fee.

The program works by scanning a hard drive for all files, offering the user a list of those available for backup, then safely builds a copy of the selected files and directories on a number of floppies. In this way, the user can ensure his or her data is safe from unexpected disasters, a vital if much overlooked practice for all HD owners.

As the program is originally supplied on a disk of its own, we've archived the lot in our usual fashion and you'll have to unpack the archive first. Once this process is complete, boot from your hard drive and insert MRBackup in a drive, open the disk window and double click on the MRBackup icon.

A window will appear with a variety of options and buttons on offer. First, a string gadgets tell the program where its preferences are saved, which by default is on the MRBackup disk and shouldn't be changed. Next there is the home path, which simply tells MRBackup which hard drive to look at first and shouldn't need to be fiddled with as yet. Finally, the backup path is selectable using the third gadget.

This is DF0: for the moment, indicating that MRBackup will use the internal floppy drive to write backups and look for restored data. This can be changed to another drive if you like by clicking on the question mark button. A file requester will appear, using which you can choose to write data to a different floppy drive.

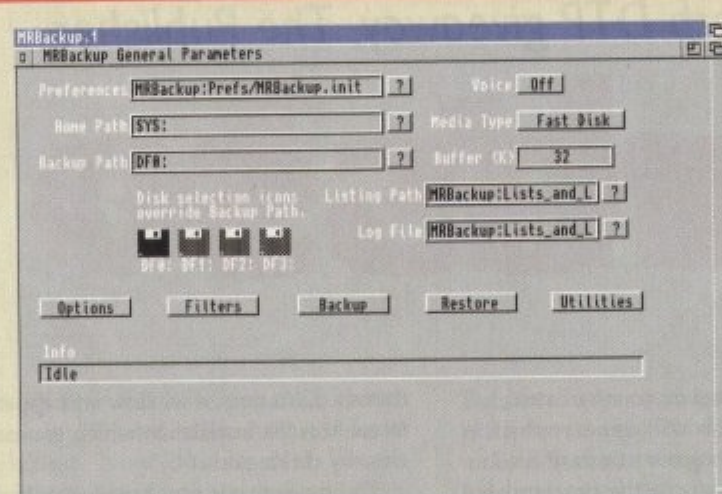
If a second floppy is attached to your Amiga's external drive port, MRBackup will automatically detect this and use it, so there's really no need to change this setting either. Below the string gadgets, four floppy disk icons represent which drives might potentially be available, and those which are not will be ghosted out.

On the right of the string gadgets, several other options are presented, the first of which is a frivolous voice button which, if set to on, will force MRBackup to report all system responses via the Workbench narrator device. Below this is an important button which governs the type of backup media used.

Clicking on this toggles through three settings – AmigaDOS, Fast Disk, and SCSI tape. The first will save all data to normal Amiga disks as normal Amiga files and is rather slow, though it does have the advantage of being ultra safe (paranoid hard drive users take note). The second is the default Fast Disk setting which MRBackup uses for most backups. Fast Disk uses any 3.5in floppy and formats it as the data is written to the disk, automatically splitting large files across two or more disks to use all available disk space.

The resulting backup disks will only be recognised by MRBackup (so make sure you have a backup of MRBackup somewhere safe!), but has the advantage of being secure, and much faster than the AmigaDOS method.

A third option is available for those with access to SCSI tape streamer devices, the



The main screen, from where backup and restoration options are accessed

most efficient and speedy backup method but also one which the vast majority of us will not use.

Tape streamers are huge digital tape devices capable of storing the contents of an entire HD on one tape, but they are usually only found attached to network servers in office settings.

To round off the buttons on the main screen, a row of five gadgets can be used to access the various sections of the program. Options opens a screen on which the user can set the date for the backup, the prefix for backup disks, such as "MyPiccies", and a variety of preference settings controlling how backups and restores are carried out.

This would be a good time to hit the help key to summon MRBackup's excellent on-line help. Using the Browse, Contents, and Restore buttons we can move through a variety of information screens where tips and information of all kinds are stored.

Use the on-line help for any option on which you are unsure, but there are three buttons we need to take a closer look at. Two of these, marked Compression and Decompression, tell the program what type oc crunching to use on the data being backed up and range from none to 16-bit. The higher the compression goes the fewer floppies are needed, but backup times increase dramatically.

Third and most important is the button in the lower right-hand corner labelled Verify Writes. By default this is set to "no", which means data saved to a floppy during a backup is not tested for errors, but we would recommend this is always set to "yes".

Backups will take half as long again when verification is turned on, but if dodgy old disks are used the user can find on attempting to restore the data that disk four in a set of 23 is corrupt, which means the data on all subsequent disks cannot be accessed, a nightmare we could all do without.

Now click on OK to take us back to the main screen and click on the Filters button. Filters have to be written using a text editor such as ED, but can be very useful in

the DISK

the box icon (see diagram for details) and draw a box anywhere on the page. We started in cursor mode, which is used for most things including creating boxes, but if we now want to input some text we'll have to change to text input by clicking on the gadget with a large capital "T" in it.

Do so now and type a word or two into the box. If you don't like the font we're using, just click on the top right gadget (paragraph mode) then on the box whose contents you want to change.

Now select Alter Current from the Type Style menu. Various options, including changing the font and its typography settings are available, but these are covered in the tutorial, so leave everything as it is.

See how the mode we are in affects what actions we can carry out? If we hadn't clicked on the paragraph gadget the Type Style menu would not have been available. Above all, when using The Publisher you must keep track of which mode you are working in or you may become confused as to why some options aren't working.

Again, another important aspect of the program is the list approach used for all imported text and graphics and for a document's style tags. The list can be seen below the page view area and will be blank to start with.

When a file is imported for use in a document it isn't pasted straight into the currently active box but stored in the list until it is needed. This approach means, among other benefits, that if a logo is to be used in several places it only has to be loaded once, but bear the list in mind when importing text or graphics in case you're wondering where the image or text file has gone.

Placing an imported file in a box is a simple matter of ensuring that the target box is selected, then clicking on the list entry.

Keep these simple rules in mind and follow the detailed tutorial on creating a flyer and you should find The Publisher a useful and productive tool.

Full details on the cut price manual offer can also be found in this issue for those who wish to delve deeper into this complex package's innermost secrets.

Faulty CoverDisk?

If you subscribe to *Amiga Computing* and your disk does not work, please return it to:

Amiga CoverDisk
Europress Direct
FREEPOST
Ellesmere Port
L65 3ED

If you bought your copy from a newsagent and find that your CoverDisk is faulty, please return it to:

Pro-Soft
5 River Gardens,
Business Centre,
Spur Road, Feltham
TW14 0SN

telling the Amiga which files we always want to back up.

For example, DH1 might contain mostly commercial programs for which we have the original disks, in which case we already have a backup, so there's no need to include these.

We might simply want to ensure that, say, the directories containing business letters, PageSetter layouts, and images generated in DPaint or a rendering package are selected for backup, and filters can be written to instruct MRBackup of this. All instructions on the format of filters can be accessed from this screen by pressing the help key again.

Let's go back to the main screen again and click on Backup. From here we can start a backup using the home path set in the main screen and any filters we have constructed, so skip back to the main screen, set the homepath as SYS:Prefs, then return to the backup screen and click on Ok.

Your Prefs drawer will be scanned for all files (unless a filter was set) and a new screen will appear showing the drawer in a window to the left. On the right, a number of options are available to select or deselect files, and two string gadgets can be used to tell the program which files to include or exclude using standar d AmigaDOS wildcards.

Directory contents

Double click on the Prefs drawer as listed in the window and MRBackup will display the directory contents, all of which are selected at the moment. To deselect individual files or sub-directories, just click on the file name. To select or deselect a range of similar files, use the string gadgets.

For example, you could deselect all icon files by entering the string "#?.info" in the exclude pattern string. Once happy that you have selected the appropriate files, three information boxes below the option gadgets will inform you how many entries there are, how many have been selected, and how many disks will be required to complete the backup, which in this case should be just one disk.

Now click on OK and you should be prompted to insert the first backup disk in a drive. Do so now and the program should make a copy of the Prefs drawer fairly quickly. Remember that you should have used the Options screen to set verify to on.

Once the backup is complete you will be asked to remove the backup disk, then prompted to save the backup catalogue to df0:. Confirm that you wish to do this and either save the catalogue to the MRBackup disk or choose a spare floppy to store all your catalogues.

These catalogues are important in that they record the status of all files saved to disk during the backup and are used by MRBackup when restoring the data, so make sure you save the catalogue where you can find it again.

It would also be a good idea to give the catalogue file a more descriptive name such as Prefs25Jan1994 to save guesswork at a later date.

Catalogues are only needed when the user wants to select files from a backup rather than splurge the whole lot back onto hard drive, but it's a good idea to save one out just in case.

If you don't bother or can't remember where the catalogue was saved, use the rebuild catalogue option from the main screen's Operations menu. This could take some time, but is better than restoring 20Mb of data just to retrieve one file.

To complete our test run, we can restore the data to hard drive, but this is not recommended unless forced on the user by a catastrophe such as a read/write error.

The first rule of hard drive use is that if it works, don't mess with it, so we'll restore the data to a safe place such as RAM: (if you have a spare 1Mb or so) or another drawer on the hard drive.

Back on the main screen, set the Home Path to RAM: or a safe directory such as SYS:Storage, then go to the Restore screen by clicking the appropriate button on the main screen and click on OK.

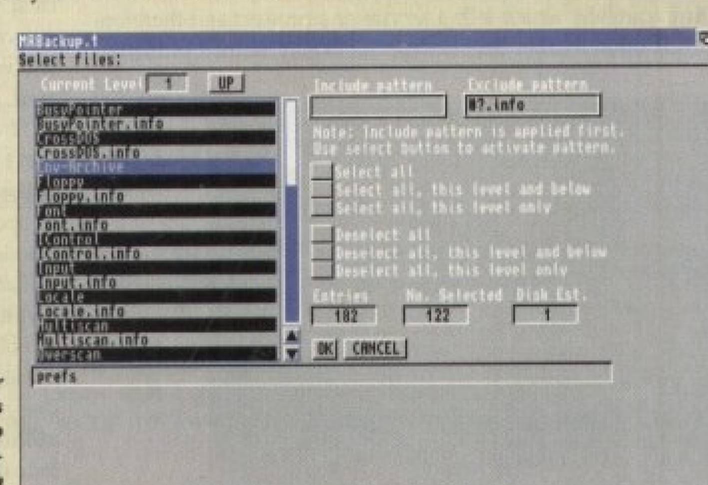
A requester should appear to tell you that a catalogue is only necessary if you want a partial restore (selecting only certain files to retrieve). As we are restoring the complete Prefs drawer, just click on Ignore Catalogue.

You will be prompted to insert the backup disk and the program will read the disk and save its backed-up files in the directory chosen using Home Path.

Once the restore is complete you can check for yourself and a copy of your Prefs drawer should be sitting there gaily waving and smiling, safe in the knowledge that he's been cloned.

That is the essence of MrBackup, and by following the above rules, making sure you set the correct paths and use verify, you should be able to ensure that your precious data is protected from future mishaps.

Use the on-line help for more detailed information on the program's features or, better still, contact MR Software and order a manual. The details can be found in the shareware doc you'll find on the de-archived disk.



Select or exclude files for backup using the on-screen requester



Vidi Amiga 12 fix

Due to an error in the de-archiving script which was used on last month's Vidi Amiga 12 demo disk, the archive failed to properly unpack to a new disk. Please follow the routine outlined below to remedy the problem.

We apologise for any inconvenience the mistake has caused to our readers.

1. Boot from the CoverDisk again and double click the Make-Vidi icon, then wait until the process fails and the de-archiving window disappears.

2. Click in the Shell window at the bottom of the CoverDisk screen and type:

```
RAM:
```

if you have a Workbench 2/3. If you have a Workbench 1.2/1.3 machine, replace the CoverDisk in DF0: and type:

```
C:CD RAM:
```

3. Ensure that the floppy just formatted by the faulty script is in DF0: and type:

```
LHA E,X VIDIAMIGA12.LHA VIDIAMIGART:
```

The archive should be unpacked and the new Vidi Amiga 12 disk completed.

Share Manager 2.03

Author: Ben Muller

If Britain is, as we have been told *ad nauseam*, turning into a share-holding democracy, the usefulness of a program such as this is beyond question. Share Manager is designed to enable the user to keep track of the value of investments over time, including the all-important values of yield and share price.

To set up a portfolio, we must first select New from the Project menu, then tell the program how much money, or capital, we have to spend.

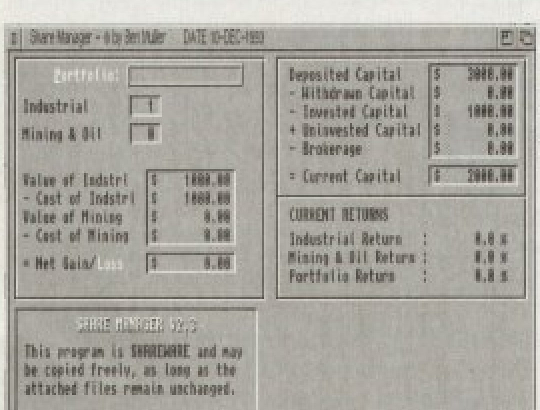
This is done by choosing Deposit on the Capital menu and typing in a figure. The maximum amount in any one portfolio is £10 million, so even the more well-heeled among us should be fine.

If anyone out there finds this amount restricting, feel free to post the difference to someone who might make better use of it.

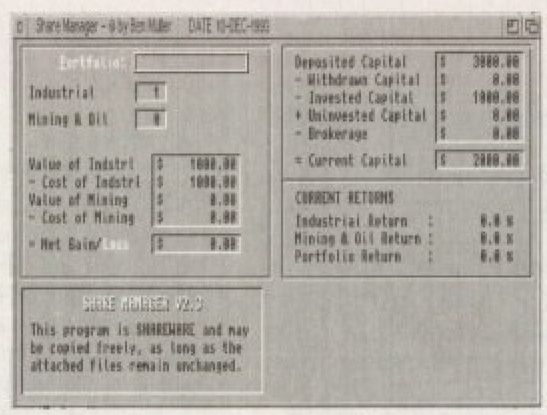
Once a capital limit has been set, type a name for the portfolio in the string gadget to the top left of the program window and start entering those shares. Two types of company are specified, industrial and mining, a distinction made for two reasons.

First, this program was written by an Australian and they tend to have oil and gold (not all of it in cans) out there, and secondly because the fortunes of these two types of company are affected by different factors.

Any company which sells a service or a product and therefore depends upon market demand can be loosely termed industrial



Share Manager's handy built in financial jargon buster



An account with £1,000 in stocks and £2,000 left to spend

(yes, even McDonalds), and any company whose value depends on the discovery of new raw materials can be called a mining company (though we can't include Liverpool FC in this category, even if their raw materials are looking a bit three-legged these days).

Selecting the appropriate type of company opens a second window into which the shares can be entered. Use the Buy option on the Share menu to open a small information panel which will expect values for the share name, price (in pence), quantity bought, and so on, after which the block of shares will be entered in the window.

If you don't know what the Yield and P/E values mean, you probably don't have shares, but you can find out in any case by using the Help Me menu available from the main screen.

An option called What are? will open a scrolling list of financial terms , and by clicking on the term of your choice you can treat yourself to a short definition, just the ticket when you've grown tired of watching the videos you recorded over Christmas and want nothing more than to settle down by the fire for a good read.

Share Manager works using the built-in clock, and if you don't have one the program's usefulness will be limited. As long as the date is constantly changing, Share Manager will allow you to update the information on any share block you like then print out a graph of your investment's performance over time.

Ratner isn't as big in Australia as in the UK, so don't expect a graph with its lower limit set somewhere in your basement.

Full details of the various options and how to use them are presented in the on-disk documentation, but as Share Manager doesn't use jargon beyond the average share owner's ken, the millions of you who own bits of the water, gas, or electricity industries should be able to keep track of the missing family silver with relative ease.

Worms

Author: Ekke Verheul

Worms is a screen blanker with a difference in that it doesn't wait for a specified time until blanking the screen and the original display cannot be restored by anyone who doesn't know the correct key combination, thus offering a certain security.

Best uses for the program are when printing a long document, rendering an animation, or carrying out some other lengthy task which most definitely should not be interrupted by the prying fingers of small children or other household inhabitants.

Take it from me that coming home expecting three hours of rendering to have produced satisfying results only to find that the cat had run over the keyboard and upset the process after only 15 minutes is a moment one doesn't want to go through too often.

By default, when the program is started, pressing Che control and left Shift keys will turn the worm blank on, while pressing control and left Alt will turn it off.

When on, a number of squiggly lines (euphemistically termed "worms") will wriggle around the screen eating away at the blackness to reveal a spiral pattern until the process is repeated.

DEATH GRIP

No keyboard input other than the secret off switch and the three fingered death grip (Ctrl-left/Amiga-right/Amiga) will be accepted while blanking is in progress, and should you want more security a third key can be added to the off switch by entering its Ascii code in a tool type found on the program's icon.

For example, using the tool type KEY=70 will mean that the delete key will have to be pressed as well as the left Alt and control keys before blanking is turned off. Other useful Ascii codes include 95 (Help key), 80 to 89 (F1 to F10), and 13 (\ or backslash key), but others can be found in the Amiga manual or a printer manual.

Ensuring that the third key is far away from the two defaults will keep the risk of someone accidentally hitting the correct keys to a minimum, though I've had to strive hard to find one which is farthest away from the pattern made by a cat's paw prints while walking.

Worms can be launched at startup by dragging the icon into the WBStartup drawer and will not blank until told to. In addition the program has a low priority, so shouldn't slow down any job the Amiga might be doing while you're away from the screen.

Full details of the other options and tool types can be found in the Worms

Scion

Author: Robbie J Akins

Scion is a modern geneology program designed to help those who wish to trace and record their family trees, and like any other geneology program is in effect a highly specialised database.

Unlike some utilities of this kind, however, Scion makes no concession to secular or social conventions, and so does not revolve entirely around the nuclear family.

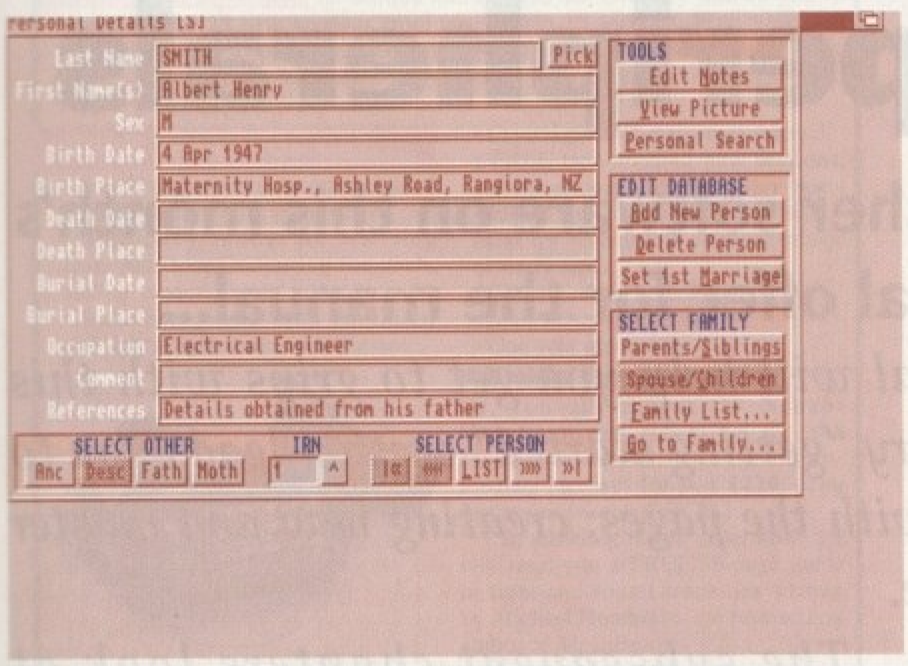
Weddings, when recorded, do not have to be between man and woman, and children do not have to hold the same surname as their parents, thus allowing for divorce, adopted children, second families, and gay spouses.

When loaded, the program displays a window split into three main areas. The main window holds personal details of the person currently being viewed, below which there are a number of gadgets for searching through the list people in the current database. To the right a set of tools are on offer with which relationships can be defined to set up family groups.

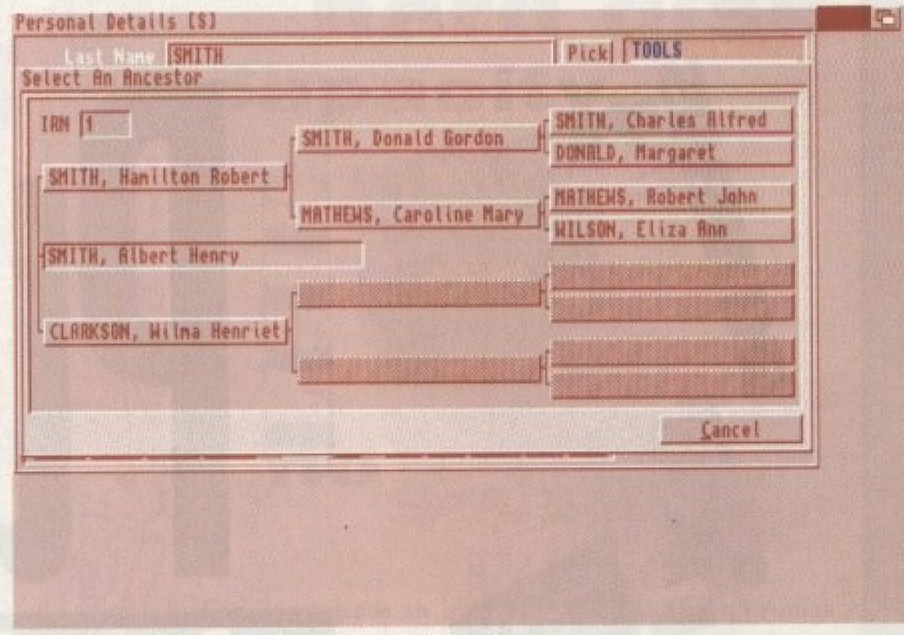
If you have ever used a geneology program or carried out research into your family history, you will know that the most time consuming job is the collection of birth, death, and marriage certificates and the collation of the disparate data into some sort of pattern.

The web of marriages and children soon spreads until a simple look back at great-grandfather's descendants can cover the living room floor with a blizzard of yellowing documents.

With Scion the process is made more simple in that the user just types in the names of everyone involved then uses the family group tools to tell the program who married who, when, and where, who was who's child, and so on until the available data has all been entered.



Scion's main screen is where all personal details are entered



Tracing a person's ancestors using Scion's family tree display

A simple selection on the information gadgets at the bottom of the screen will then enable one to trace fathers, mothers, ancestors and descendants for any chosen person, and a variety of different reports can be committed to paper via the print menu.

An example file, imaginatively entitled "Example", can be found in the same directory as Scion and should now be loaded to demonstrate the capabilities of the program.

The database holds the details of 108 people grouped into 34 family groups ranging across several generations and is a good illustration of how Scion works.

Starting with Albert Smith, born in 1947, we can trace the Smith family backwards and forwards to the oldest known relatives and the most recent children. Click first on the Anc (ancestors) button and a screen showing Albert and his parents on the left will pop up.

The previous two generations are displayed to the right, so click on Albert's great-grandfather, Charles Smith. We are returned to the Personal detail screen where we can see that Charles was born in 1848 and worked as a bookseller.

To trace Charles's descendants, click on the Desc (descendants) button and a tree will be shown in which male relatives are displayed in blue and female in red.

We can go down the generations by clicking on names farther to the right, but notice for now that spouses are marked by an S and that children, the next generation, are indented one level to give us a clear picture of how the family has progressed through the years.

Using Scion, aided by the detailed manual on the CoverDisk, any reader should find that organising the family history is a much easier job and that charts of one's family make-up can be generated and printed in minutes.

Think you can do better?

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If you ensure your program is as compatible as possible with a wide variety of Amigas, it will also stand a better chance of publication. We are especially interested in small programs whether they be games, utilities or whatever.

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PAGE LAYOUT

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The *Amiga Computing* CoverDisk is designed to be as simple to use as possible. Follow these instructions and you'll be up and running in no time!

GETTING STARTED



New readers may have difficulties using our CoverDisk, so we have included this page to help you out.

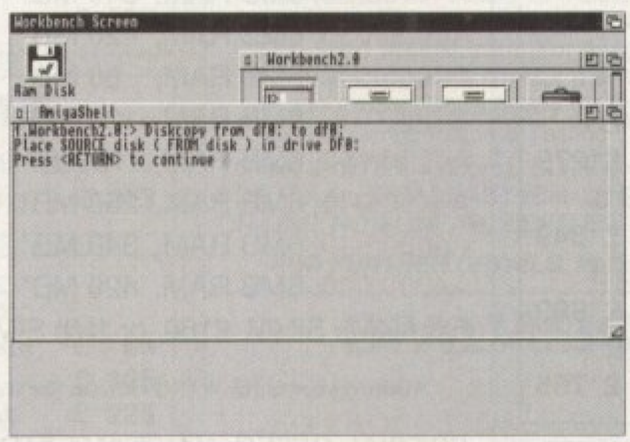
Below we explain how to copy files from one disk to another, how to copy the entire CoverDisk and how to de-archive programs. None of the first things you must do when get your CoverDisk is make a backup copy, then put the original CoverDisk away for safe keeping. As a rule you should also do this with the majority of your software collection.

How to make a backup

To copy the entire CoverDisk, load up your Workbench disk, then either click once on the CoverDisk icon and select Duplicate, or select Copy from the Workbench menu, or open CLI/Shell and type:

```
DISKCOPY FROM DF0: TO DF0:
```

When prompted, put your CoverDisk (the source disk) in df0: and be ready to replace it with your blank disk (the destination disk). Follow the Amiga's on-screen prompts until the disk copy is completed. Now put the original away in a safe place and use your backup.



Copying individual files

You might at some point want to copy a single program from a CoverDisk to your compilation, Workbench disk or even your hard drive.

To do this you'll need the COPY command. As most CoverDisk programs are stashed away in their own directories, the quickest way to copy a program is to copy the whole directory at once. Use the command:

```
COPY {directory} TO {newdisk} ALL
```

where {directory} is the full pathname of the directory you wish to copy, and {newdisk} is the name of the disk and directory into which it will be copied.

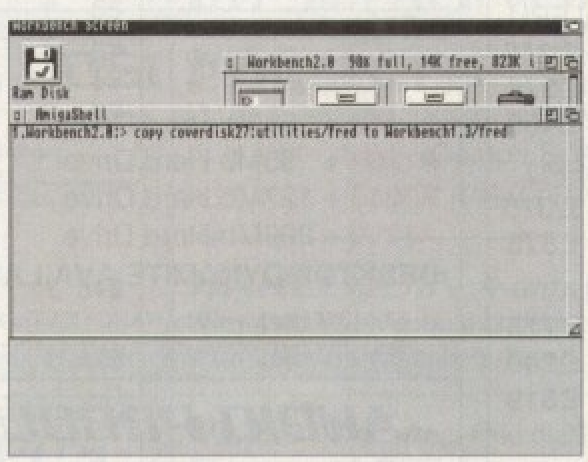
For example, if you wanted to copy a utility called FRED from CoverDisk 27's Utilities drawer to a directory called FRED on your Workbench disk, you'd type:

```
COPY COVERDISK27:UTILITIES/FRED TO WORKBENCH1.3/FRED ALL
```

Alternatively, you can click once on the FRED directory icon and drag it across to the new disk's window. This has the advantage of creating a new directory for you and copying the icon as well.

Once you have moved a particular program to where you require it you could experience some problems running the program. This is sometimes caused by the program not being able to find files which it needs to run.

A good example is the text files on the CoverDisk. These have been crunched using PowerPacker, so when you try to copy them to another disk and then try to read them you can't unless you have also copied the Powerpacker library into your LIBS drawer.



So if you have copied a program from the CoverDisk to your Work disk or hard drive make sure you also copy any other files the program requires, ie fonts, libraries, device drivers and Ccommands.

De-archiving

Occasionally we have so many programs to fit onto the CoverDisk that we have to archive them. Archiving is where we take the entire contents of a disk and compress them into one file which is much smaller, giving us space to fit more programs onto the disk.

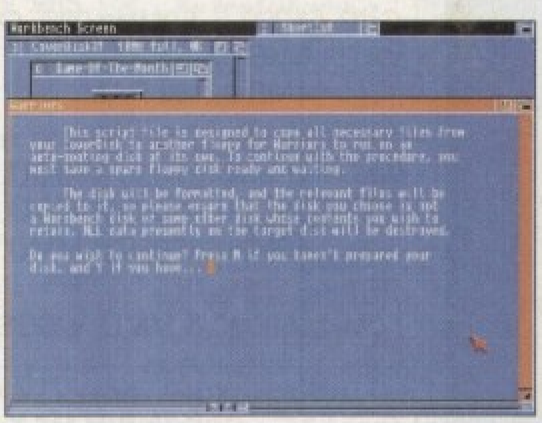
Dearchiving programs which are on the CoverDisk is a very simple task. If a program has been archived then you will need a blank disk to dearchive it onto.

Say we have archived a program called FRED. You simply double click on FRED's icon, and will be asked if you have a blank disk ready to dearchive to. Type "y" or "n" accordingly.

Your computer will then copy the archived file into its memory and ask you to insert your blank disk. It will proceed to format the disk, and will then de-crunch the archived file onto your blank disk.

Once this has been done you can simply reboot your machine with the disk which contains the dearchived program on it and then use the program as instructed in the CoverDisk pages.

Note that if you have a Workbench 2 or upward machine you must boot with the CoverDisk write-enabled to perform the dearchiving process.





Workbench 3

If you have a Workbench 3 machine, don't worry – most if not all of the programs on the CoverDisk will work on your machines.

If the program is specifically designed to work with Workbench 3 then you may have to copy the program to your hard drive or Workbench disk using the process described earlier on this page.

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Ideal for Digital Broadcaster 32

I always said that the Amiga was the perfect creative computer. Nobody really paid much attention to me originally, partly because the Amiga was a bit of an unknown quantity at the time, but mostly because I used to slam my hand on the table when I said it.

Ahem. But the fact remains I was right, and more artists and creators of all sorts are using the Amiga for their work as well as their play.

Ever since some bright spark at Commodore US thought of using the late great Andy Warhol and Deborah (aka Debbie) Harry at the launch of the Amiga, our machine of choice remains a firm favourite with creators of all kinds, but particularly artists.

Warhol in fact continued to use the Amiga up to his death, saying in 1986: "The thing I like most about doing this kind of art on the Amiga is that it looks like my work."

Laurie Anderson used to use the Amiga for her stage shows, grabbing in animated sequences from video using the old LIVE! digitiser and using them as a projected backdrop for her performances.

Admittedly now a lot of the Amiga artists working in the world today use the video capabilities of the Amiga, and none more so than users of NewTek's Video Toaster, which is still taking Hollywood by strategy.

The Post Group use the Amiga on many TV projects using both the Toaster and ASDG's Morph Plus. Recent projects include *The Tommyknockers*, a Stephen King TV movie, and the popular BBC 2 time travelling series *Quantum Leap*, both of which used morph effects created with MorphPlus.

INDIE

Jeff Ginn uses Amiga technology to produce special effects for the popular *Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* series you can't fail to have seen if you have Sky One, either through the dish in your roof or on cable.

Although some of the other effects made using the Amiga are perhaps more glamorous,



The



Top TV graphics from the Amiga

Ron Thornton

***Anyone who reads Amiga magazines or watches TV will be aware of the work of English special effects wizard Ron Thornton. He was a leading effects man in the UK on cult shows like* Blake's Seven*, and now is the creator, with his US-based company Foundation Imaging, of the visual effects for the Emmy award winning sci-fi TV show,* Babylon 5.**

"I started out in model making, and doing effects more traditionally. My partner and I had been fascinated by computer graphic imaging for some time, like way back to the old Apple II days. There were boards around at about £10,000, and you could just render 24-bit images on them and I thought they were fabulous.

"But you never got a chance to play with 3D, as in modelling, animation or anything like that. After having worked in Canada on a show called *Captain Power and the Soldiers of the Future*, I went and bought an Amiga and started playing around with some of the packages that were available like Sculpt 3D and those ones...

"It was fun but it wasn't a production tool. It couldn't do anything but HAM, and nobody had 24-bit. So when the Toaster came out it was like, well give it a try. It's got a 3D package with it, it can't be any worse than Turbo Silver or Imagine. It was actually very good. I said to myself I'll see if I can make something from scratch in 30 minutes. And I did. So it passed the test.

"After that it was just a question of if I could do what I do normally but in the computer. So I just set to re-building a miniature that I had made years ago for *Blake's Seven* and make it in the Amiga, and it worked very very nicely.

"The thing is you're really striving to make something look fairly real, but at the same time give it a certain flair. Being one of the thirtysomething brigade I was brought up on *Thunderbirds*, *Captain Scarlet*, *Dan Dare* and stuff like that, so a sense of style and colour is something that I've always had.

"I've always felt that the *Star Wars* movies seemed to miss that with their grey spaceships. But Thunderbirds was great, it was very colourful, and obviously inspired by Frank Hampson and Dan Dare. So we thought 'let's bring a little bit of that to a mainstream TV show'. So we've ended up coming up with pretty colourful stuff.

"It's a very neat show, the script is very good. Compared the to the actual series the pilot was rubbish. The series is great, the concepts are great, the effects are so much better than the pilot. The pilot was very much a learning process for us.

"They were very brave in taking the risk, because nobody had done a TV show like that before. It was like an ordeal by fire. Can you produce this number of shots in

> *The gap between the big boys and us is closing rapidly*



Dr. Who was Ron's earliest success



Ron's latest work is stunningly detailed

artistic Amiga

More than ever the Amiga is making inroads into the real world, proving itself to be the ultimate creative computer. Phil South talks to working artists who use the Amiga as a key player in their creative universe



> *The thing I like most about doing this kind of art on the Amiga is that it looks like my work*
>
> **Andy Warhol**

what Jeff produces is just as important. He makes a great deal of the signage used in the series, like posters and signs above shops, and all in the style of the 1920s.

The exciting science fiction series *Babylon 5* is coming to Channel 4 in March 94 – another show which relies on the Amiga to create its visual effects.

Ron Thornton, ex-BBC special effects man on such historic shows as *Dr Who* and *Blake's Seven*, now lives and works in the USA, and works almost exclusively on the Video Toaster.

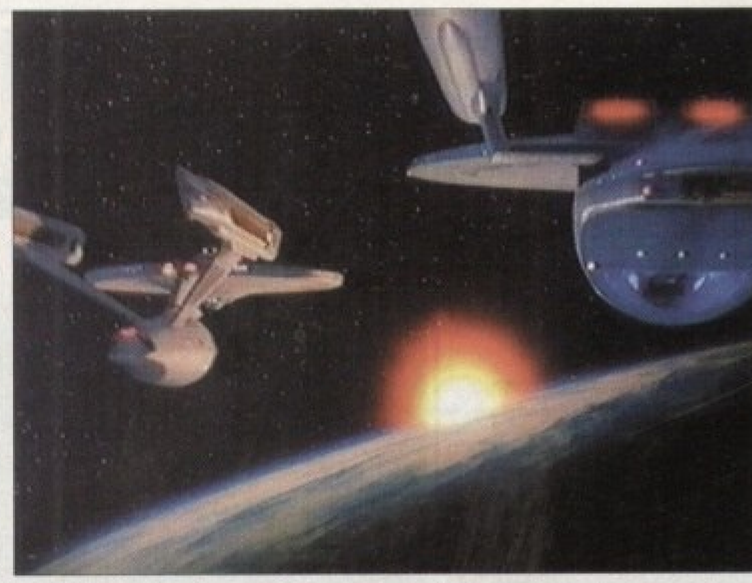
You can read what he has to say about the Amiga in a moment, but it's becoming clear that the Amiga can deliver not just as-good-as results, but better than.

On Speilberg's *Jurassic Park*, what they call "pre-visualisation" of the monster dinos was done by Stefan Dechant of Amblin Imaging. Amblin also do the SFX for the SeaQuest series, and now have over 60 Video Toasters.

STAR TREK VI

Already effects which Amblin have achieved before only with Silicon Graphics workstations are now being done with fairly ordinary Amigas with enough memory and CPU power.

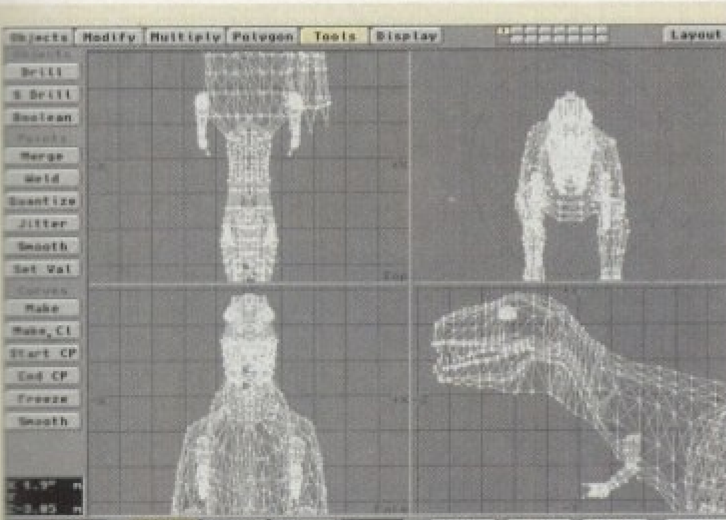
Then there's *Star Trek VI*, which also featured Lightwave-generated graphics by Post Group associate Joe Conti, with the USS Enterprise and USS Excelsior modelled by none other that Lightwave creator Allen Hastings. Joe Conti is also responsible for an episode of *Unsolved Mysteries* featuring some pretty realistic UFOs. Now we see the Amiga turning up in all manner of places, especially in the music community. There are a lot of musicians following in Laurie Anderson's footsteps, the obvious one being Todd Rundgren, who now produces all his videos using the NewTek Toaster, and even has a company set up to do it called Nutopia.



Models from Star Trek VI, created by Lightwave author Allen Hastings

Ex-patriot whiplash smiler Billy Idol is now an Amiga head too, and he uses Amiga-generated video walls in his video and stage work. He is also a regular visitor to The WELL conferencing system in San Francisco.

Other famous and enthusiastic users include Matt Groening, creator of *The Simpsons*, and *Star Trek: The Next Generation* actors Carel Struycken, the ➤



Jurassic Park dinosaurs were modelled in Lightwave before being rendered on an SGI machine

this amount of time? No other way could you possibly do it. "We're doing 10, 15, 20 shots a week sometimes, which is phenomenal. *Star Trek: The Next Generation* has about five new shots a week, plus a bunch of screen displays. And we're a quarter of their price! We only have an animation crew of five. We're not working on anything else at the moment... at least nothing I can talk about to an English person.

"We're running 2000s, some running RCS 040 boards, some CSA. We've got 32Mb of memory on all of them, and we run that into a Novell Netware server. Oh yes, and the new version of Lightwave is amazing.

"I mean, right now on the screen in front of me I'm animating a dinosaur. How long ago did they do *Jurassic Park*? Now you can do it all on a desktop computer! The gap between the big boys doing it and us doing it is closing rapidly, which is a lot of fun."



Some of the superb Lightwave images from Babylon 5

giant Mr Hom, and Wil Wheaton who plays Ensign Wesley Crusher. Wil actually works for NewTek now, and can be seen demoing the Toaster at all the shows they attend.

OK, so the Video Toaster has converted a lot of people over to the Amiga, but you can't rule out the obvious charms of other programs like DPaint, Imagine, Real 3D and OpalPaint.

A lot of artists are now turning to computers in general and the Amiga in particular to provide a creative solution to the problem of making art which is new and computer based.



It's going to take a little while longer for people to begin using computers in a really special way, and now 24-bit is within almost anybody's reach I think we'll start seeing the end of all the same boring old video tricks.

The Amiga is, after all, the best creative computer of the last decade, and it's up to artists like these, and you too, to make sure it makes an even bigger splash in the art world of the future.

Dave Gibbons



Dave is a comic artist and one of the great British talents in comic history. As well as being famous for his solo work, he is also becoming a component part of various spectacular collaborations, with writers like Alan Moore and Frank Miller.

As well as branching into writing, he is also now designer and co-conspirator in Revolution's recent multi-format game Beneath A Steel Sky.

"I suppose I have always been interested in computers. It's funny but you know when I was at school my best subjects were science subjects, so I've always had a kind of a technological bent.

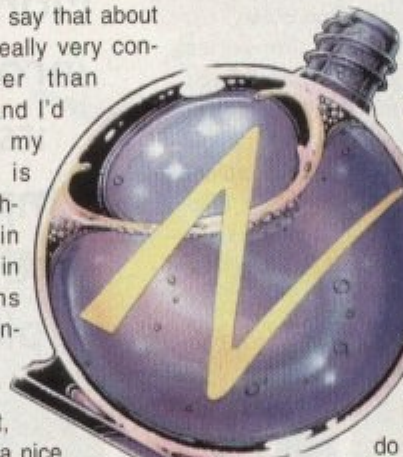
"Some people say that about my artwork, really very concrete rather than abstract, and I'd say my approach is more of a technical approach, in that I like to work in three dimensions and keep things consistent.

"I wouldn't say that I'm a techno hobbiest, but I do like to have a nice hi-fi and a nice radio and the latest kind of microwave oven and all that sort of stuff. So I'm not a technophobe, although a lot of artists are, they're not happy to use things they don't understand. I'm quite happy to use things I don't understand.

"I've had an Amiga for some years now, and although I got it initially for games, I've also used it for drawing. I can see the huge potential for doing very useful things with computers.

"Something should be done about the input side of things, there's something about it which makes it a bit hard to draw. There's something about the feel of pen or pencil in contact with paper that you just don't get with a mouse or a stylus and graphics tablet.

"I don't think I'll be really using a computer for drawing comics. I think what computers are really good at is colouring, rendering in the artistic sense. I mean, if you want to get say a sky which graduates from a deep blue down to white you can do it with an airbrush.



"But then you've got to clean it out after each ink, blow through it to make sure it's working properly, mask out all the areas you don't want the ink to go on, do it, and if the phone goes halfway through and makes you jump, you've got to do it all over again.

"It's a very labour-intensive thing. And if you don't like the look of it after you've finished you've got very little scope for changing it other than doing it all again from scratch.

Bradley Schenck

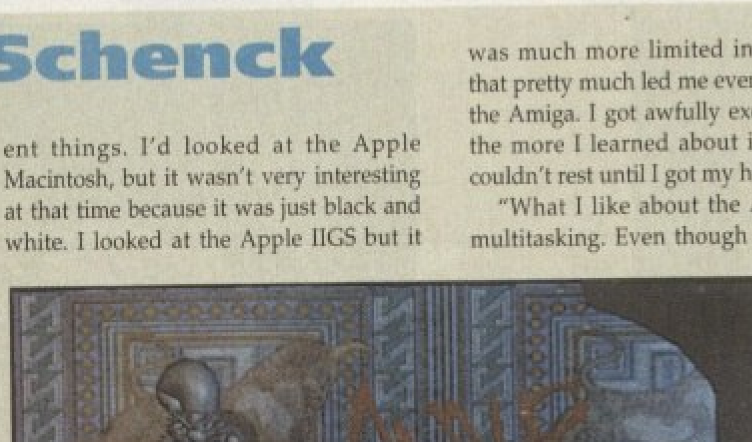
Brad has been around on the Amiga for a long time, as many of you will be aware. He is a great 2D Amiga artist, and his painted graphics have decorated a number of magazine covers, but recently he's gone all 3D and created the 3D scenery for a game soon to be out on the CD32, Labyrinth from Electronic Arts. All the graphics for Labyrinth were rendered with Imagine version 1.1 and 2.0.

"It was interesting. I had done painting but I'd kind of gotten dissatisfied with painting because I felt it was a very passive thing. I was looking for other things to do, and I was looking for things other than graphic art.

"Then about 1987 I got my first Amiga system, and discovered that there was a lot of potential there for doing things that were interactive. Something that would involve you more than a static painting does.

"I had friends who were interested in the Amiga and I looked a couple of different things. I'd looked at the Apple Macintosh, but it wasn't very interesting at that time because it was just black and white. I looked at the Apple IIGS but it was much more limited in colour, and that pretty much led me eventually just to the Amiga. I got awfully excited about it the more I learned about it, and really couldn't rest until I got my hands on one.

"What I like about the Amiga is the multitasking. Even though I don't often have the Amiga doing two very complex things at the same time, it's very nice having that available to me. It's certainly true I can do multiple things on the same system when I'm rendering, which of course can take forever.



The stunning graphics of Labrynth. Soon to be out on the CD32?

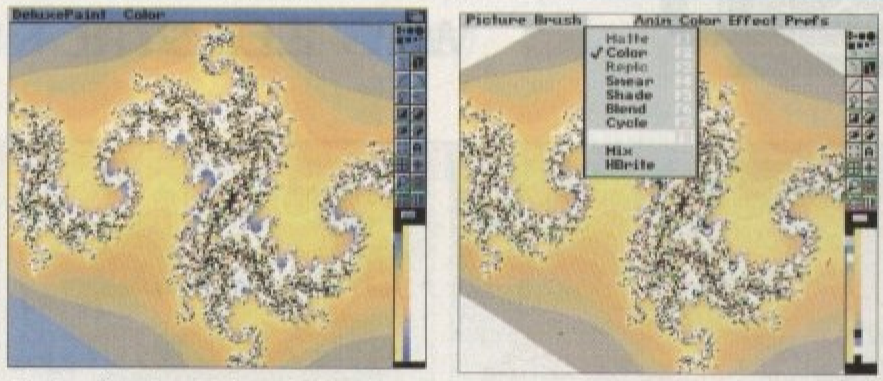
"The system can still be used for other things which is nice. I like the environment, the operating system very much. And especially in the beginning the fact that the software tends to cost much less was a big help for me, because traditionally I had never worked in a field that would give me a lot of capital to get started with.

SKETCHES

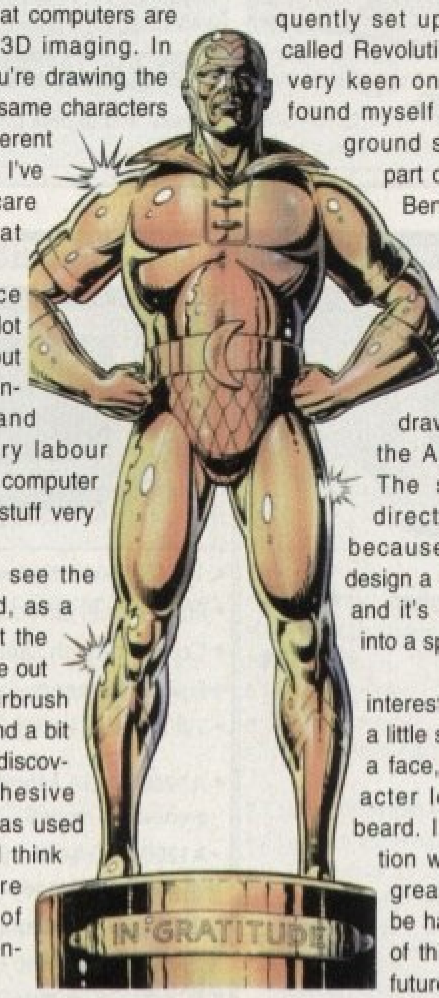
"I had to learn new techniques, definitely. It didn't take a long time to move over either. It went fairly quickly. Almost the first thing I did was I took a bunch of sketches I'd done that I'd never developed into paintings, and I sent them off to be digitised.

"I did this because when I started drawing with the mouse I just thought, god, I'll never be able to do this. So I did that and it took two or three weeks for the

> *I see the computer being used as a tool like ant other*



Simple tools such as DPaint and a fractal generator can create stunning results



"The other thing that computers are good at is straight 3D imaging. In comics very often you're drawing the same scene and the same characters from a variety of different angles. A thing which I've always taken great care to do is ensure that things are consistent.

"Again experience will allow you to do a lot of this stuff by hand, but I still have to plot vanishing points etc, and again this is all very labour intensive and on the computer you could do all this stuff very easily.

"That's the way I see the computer being used, as a tool like any other. At the time the airbrush came out there was obvious airbrush effects everywhere, and a bit later when everyone discovered that self-adhesive Letraset tone, that was used everywhere too. So I think to start with you're going to get a lot of obvious computer-generated effects.

"The things I like about the Amiga are that it's cheap, it's very user friendly, and I think DPaint is a superb painting, rendering and animation package.

"I got involved in the game because, to make a long story short, I did a comic called *Watchmen* (DC Comics) which at one point was going to be developed as a game and a film, but nothing ever came of this.

"One of the people I met was Charles Cecil, then of Activision, who subsequently set up his own company called Revolution. I've always been very keen on collaboration, so I found myself doing all the background screens and a good part of the design work for Beneath a Steel Sky.

I designed the characters too, and from those designs I also did the sprites. The backgrounds were drawn and scanned into the Amiga for treatment. The sprites were done directly into the Amiga because sometimes you design a big detailed character and it's hard to cram all that into a sprite.

"I found that really interesting, like how putting a little single pixel of blue on a face, say, makes a character look like he's got a beard. I think the collaboration worked well, it was a great experience and I'll be happy to do a lot more of this sort of thing in the future.



Some of Dave Gibbons's superb work from the Watchmen comic book series

disk to come back. But by the time I'd gotten the stuff back, I had already done complete pictures painting with the mouse, so it must have gone pretty quickly.

"The thing that really broke it for me was I went to a show where Jim Sachs was speaking and showing his work. I'd seen a little of his work already, and he was talking about how he had done everything using the mouse. I just went home and I thought, well, obviously it can be done. "I just went ahead with it and worked with it until finally it became natural. It's like any other tool, you just have to get used to using it until you don't really think about it being there. In fact I still use a mouse, I don't use a tablet, although I'm thinking about trying it again.



"I tried it several years ago, and I just didn't care for it. For some things I'll still continue to do it on paper and scan them in, just because the idea of something which emulates drawing on paper seems kind of silly to me.

"It's perfectly easy to draw on paper, and it's very direct and you can draw on ten sheets of paper out on your desk at the same time. There's something very immediate about working with paper. But I'm interested in some of the painting techniques that use pressure sensitive tablets. That's probably why I would give it another try.

"Right now I'm using TVPaint on a Retina, we also have OpalVision. My partner and I, as well as the games software, have done an animation program which works on different frame buffers



and so we've gotten kind of a collect of them now! So we have an OpalVision, but I haven't actually had a chance to play with it because my partner's got it.

"The CD32 version of Labyrinth was the first version, but it turns out they published the MS-DOS version first. But it's being published in the UK by Electronic Arts. So we don't actually know, we get it all third-hand. It was supposed to go out a week ago, there was a delay something about Commodore silk screening something onto the disks."

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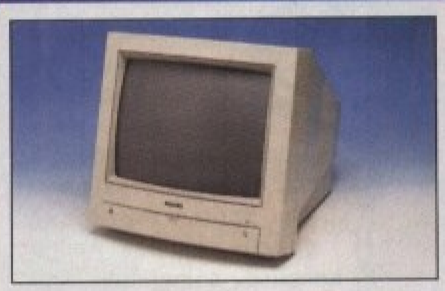
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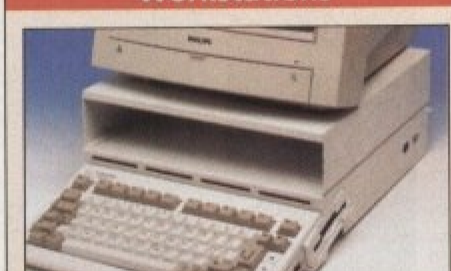
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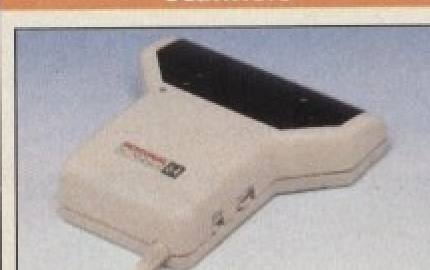
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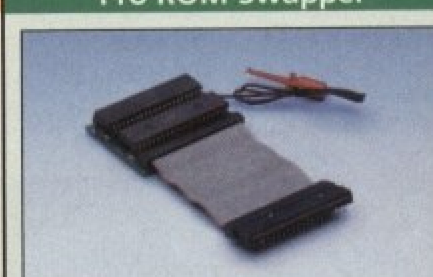
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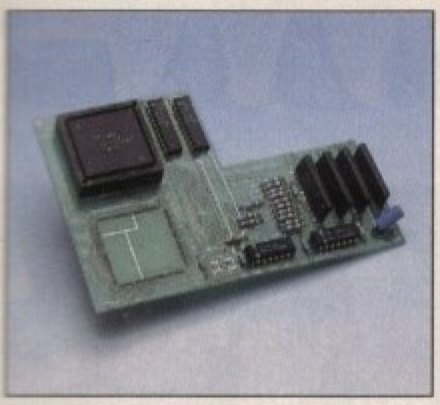
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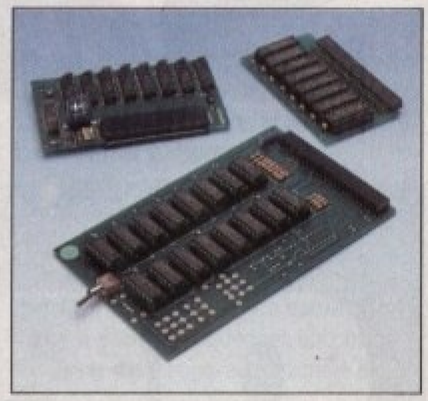
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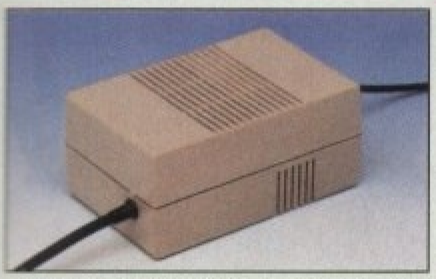
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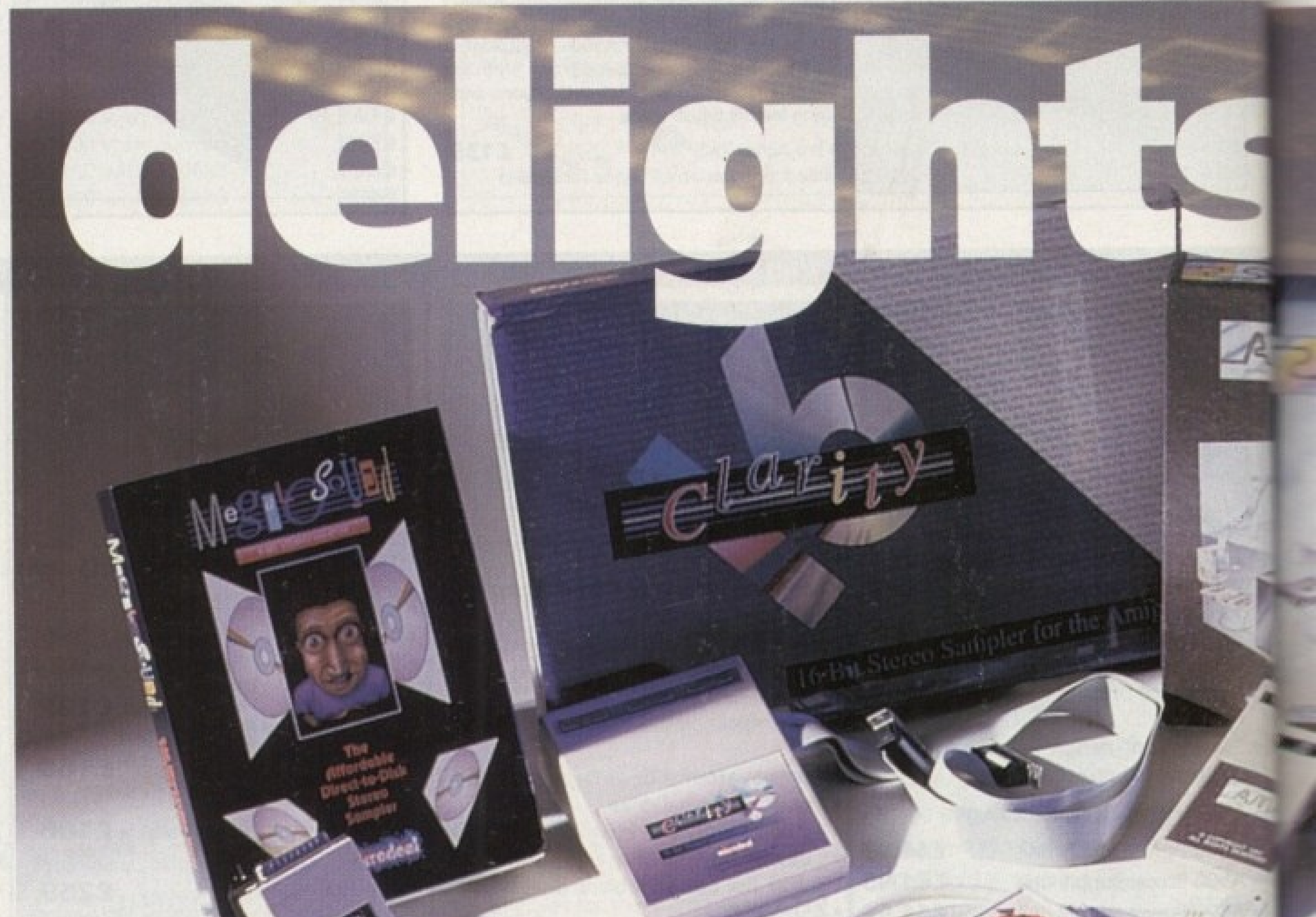
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Sample delights



Digital sound sampling has for long been one of the most popular enthusiast uses for the Amiga, but with the recent explosion in CD-ROM technology, the multimedia boom, and the need for high quality video sound effects, sampling has broadened from its original 8-bit base to a market where just about any option you wish can be supplied by one manufacturer or another.

The profusion of samplers has meant that customer choice can sometimes take on bewildering proportions, leading us neatly into a comprehensive look at the units on offer and their relative strengths.

As usual, our first step is to provide some info for anyone wanting to know where to start. The bottom line here is that you'll need a piece of hardware called a sound digitiser, plus the software to control it.

Most Amiga sampling packages include both hardware and software and with the higher priced units you'll get extras like line level and microphone level inputs, signal volume controls, switchable parallel through port connections (so that the digitiser can be left permanently plugged in) and other goodies.

Lower-priced sampling units will often have no controls at all, but this does not mean that the results obtained will be less useful. With care excellent results can be obtained from budget priced hardware and, since these types of 8-bit Amiga digitisers start at around £20, this is not an area that will necessarily frighten the bank manager!

All 8-bit sampling units attach to the Amiga's parallel port. Plug one end into the sound source (which might be a tape recorder, CD player, microphone, or some other audio signal source) and the other end into the parallel port.

SAMPLING

Having switched on and booted up the sample editing software the rest is comparatively easy. Set an appropriate sample rate, adjust the volume of the input signal to a suitable level, and then just hit record. Your sample will end up sitting in the editor waiting to be saved or edited.

The key to good sampling is to get a good input signal to start with and, where possible, this means sampling a sound directly from source rather than using a microphone.

Ideally, a strong, clear signal is provided to the digitiser without overloading the unit and causing clipping, so with digitisers which have no signal controls it is necessary to adjust the volume of the sound source being used.

Don't forget that your samples and music will sound much better if you use external speakers rather than those present in your Amiga monitor or TV. There are plenty of reasonably priced amplifier and speaker systems available and if it is physically convenient you can even use your hi-fi system.

Sound enhancers which boost particular audio frequencies can further improve the quality of the Amiga's audio output but if that's still not good enough the answer is to spend more and go for a 16-bit sampling system. When you reach for the top of the range 16-bit offerings, however, Bank managers do start to feel a little faint.

SunRize AD1012

Available From: White Knight Technology
Price: £499

The AD1012 audio card provides 12-bit digitising which, in terms of resolution, is halfway between ordinary Amiga internal sound quality and a CD. It comes complete with SunRize's Studio 16 recording and editing software which can record and playback directly from hard disk.

Although it is only a four-track mono system you do in fact need a hard disk system with quite a fast drive to get the best out of this digitiser. If you are thinking of intensive use with, say, an A2000, you are likely to need a 68030 accelerator card as well.

SunRize AD516

Available From: White Knight Technology
Price: £1299

The AD516 takes us about as far into the professional sampling league as the Amiga currently goes. It is a very high quality eight track, 16-bit, mono/stereo sampling system for serious users (or seriously rich users). The software which comes with the AD516 is Studio 16 and this provides direct-to-disk recording and SMPTE links for use with packages like the Broadcast editor.

Needless to say you need a fast machine and a fast hard drive to get the best out of this unit. A new release of the AD516 package is expected in the very near future (probably before you read this).

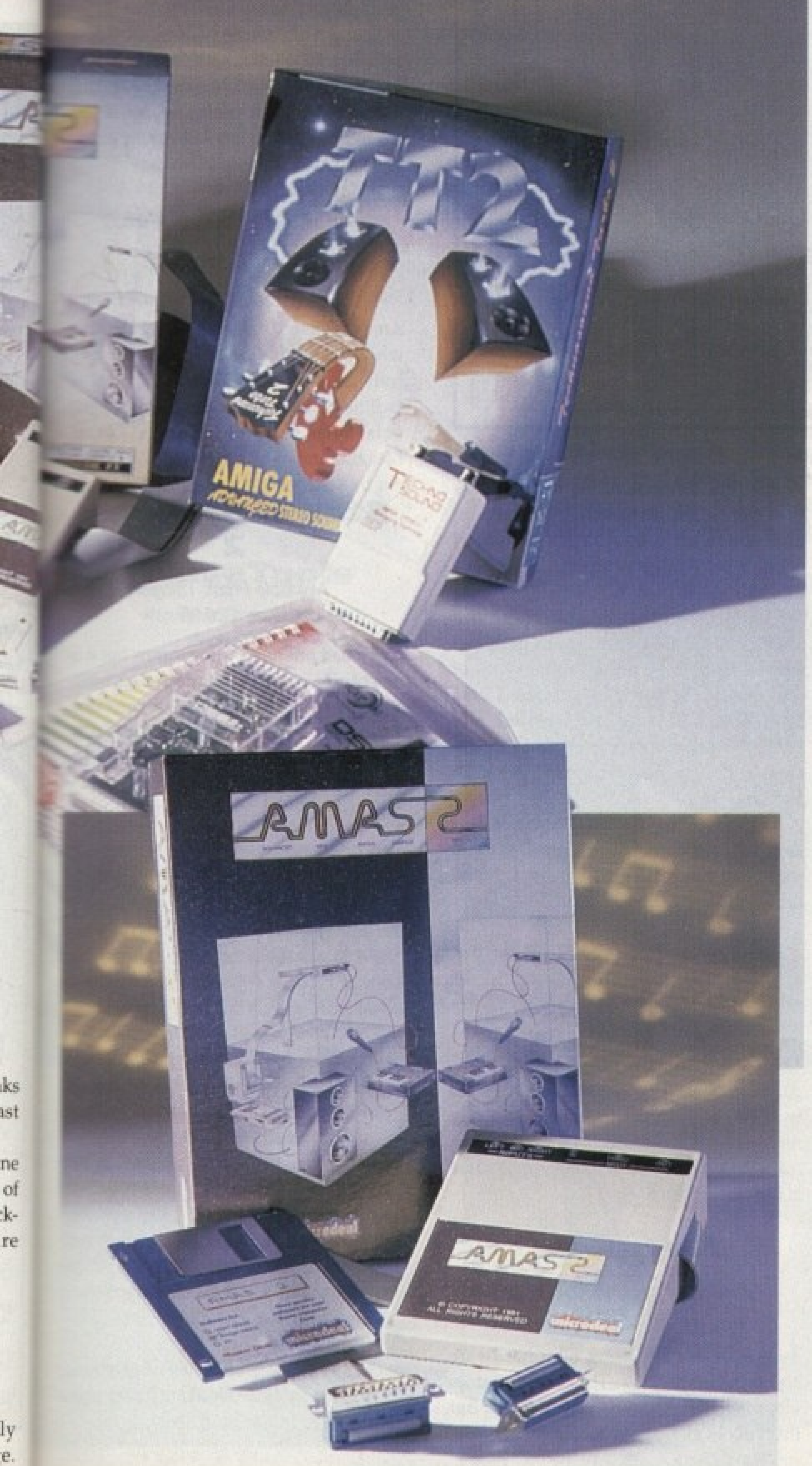
AMAS II

Available From: HiSoft
Price: £99.95

An upgraded version of the previously popular AMAS 8-bit sampling package.

the

Paul Overaa casts his ear over the many sound samplers crowding the Amiga market

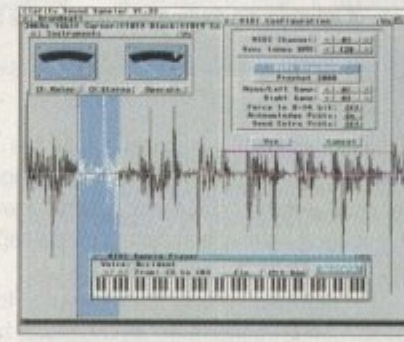


Clarity 16

Available From: HiSoft
Price: £149.95

This is a 16-bit system that can sample at up to CD rates (44.1 kHz) and convert between 8-bit and 16-bit formats so you still have IFF 8SVX support as well as 16-bit file format support.

Samples can be played both through the stereo 16-bit cartridge output or through the Amiga's standard output channels. The hardware includes an integral Midi interface and the software provides a sample sequencer and options for using the Amiga as a sample-based Midi sound expander. Clarity 16's software has improved considerably since its early days but since it cannot record and playback directly from disk you still have to work with 16-bit samples totally in memory. To get the best of out Clarity 16 you need one of the newer, faster, Amigas and upwards of 2Mb of RAM.



Some early bugs gave Clarity 16's software a less than ideal start but recent changes have produced substantial improvements. This is still the cheapest way into the world of 16-bit sampling



Software adjustable input-level controls are provided and, as well as the usual cut copy and paste editing controls, there are a whole range of effects that can be produced (echo, phasing, chorus, reversal and so on).

It is also possible to overlay samples, swap and copy channels, fade in and out, and do things like stereo bouncing. Sampled sounds can be saved in IFF and raw formats, and in a new executable form that allows samples to be played outside of AMAS II simply by clicking on an associated icon.

The software also includes a 3D FFT (Fast Fourier Transform) display and a dual real-time spectrum analyser. A small, but reasonably useful, sample-oriented Midi sequencer is also provided and you even get a microphone thrown in as well.

8-bit vs 16-bit

16-bit sampling systems provide much greater waveform detail and it is this that produces the improved quality. An 8-bit unit will measure sound signal amplitudes and store them using a relative numerical range of -128 to +127.

16-bit samplers use a -32,768 to +32,767 resolution scale which is the same as used by a compact disk. The disadvantage is that working with 16-bit samples is more processor intensive and the samples themselves take up twice as much space in memory. A solution to this latter problem is the direct-to-disk approach.

Users of direct to disk systems, however, face the second big problem, which is the huge amount of hard drive space gobbled up by stereo 16-bit samples, which can run to 10Mb per second if the sample rate is high enough.

Audio Engineer Plus V2

Available From: Hobbyte Computers
Price: £149



The RamScan/GSOFT Audio Engineer offering has been the best 8-bit Amiga sampler around for ages. It is solidly constructed with switchable microphone and line inputs, signal level adjustment, printer

TechnoSound Turbo

Available From: New Dimensions
Price: £39.99

Cheap but well designed hardware and software stereo/mono 8-bit sound sampling package which is ideal for new users. It comes with a small, though reasonably informative, manual and best of all it is capable of producing good results.

The software is more than adequate for basic sample editing and it can create all the usual types of effects (echo, fading, vibrato, phasing and so on). RAM scans, sample loop conversions, and a range of novelty effects can be achieved and easy to use song and Midi sequencers are also included.

The package includes an audio source connecting lead and nearly 60 pre-recorded samples so you've got everything you need right from the word go. TechnoSound Turbo has been one the Amiga's most popular offerings.

TechnoSound Turbo 2

Available From: New Dimensions
Price: £49.99

Everything that TechnoSound Turbo was, but better. Both the hardware and the software have undergone design changes and, for newcomers, the sampling and editing software is much easier to use. There are customised pull-down menus and things like direct to hard disk recording, so it is sure to be a winner.

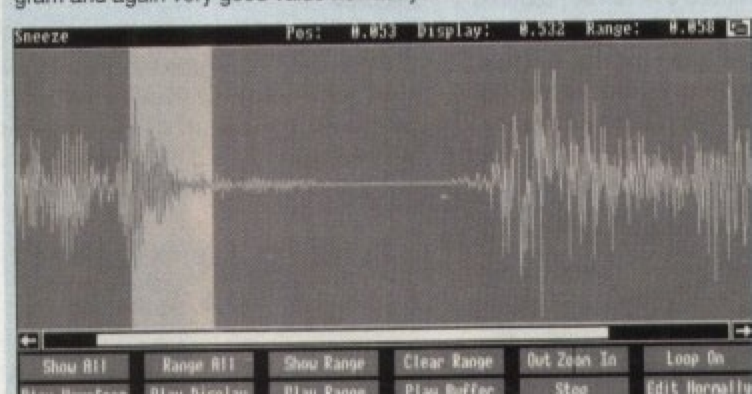
At the moment existing TechnoSound Turbo users can upgrade to this new version for £15.



Audition 4

Available From: Silica Systems
Price: £34.95

This piece of 8-bit sound sample editing software comes from SunRize, a company that know an awful lot about Amiga sampling. Audition 4 is an excellent piece of software with a great many useful features including being able to preview and adjust effects in real time before making permanent edits, and direct recording to disk or RAM. A very capable program and again very good value nowadays.



Audition 4 has always been well thought of in 8-bit sampling circles

Editing software

Once you've taken a sound sample you can edit it in many ways. It is possible to rearrange sections of the sound, alter the pitch of voices, add echo effects, perform re-sampling calculations, or even reverse the sample so that it plays backwards.

The important 8-bit sample editing facilities required by users are now very well established and all but the very cheapest 8-bit offerings provide a useful set of editing and effects options. If you are looking for standalone software to use with digitising hardware that you already have then AudioMaster IV and Audition 4 are particularly good value nowadays.

Public domain and shareware utilities can also be a great help to the budget sampling fiend, and a range of effects generators, direct to disk recording and playback tools, and other cheap and cheerful programs can be yours for only a few pounds.

➤ switch-thru connections (so that the digitiser can be left permanently plugged in) and above all a quality by which all other 8-bit Amiga samplers have been judged.

The associated sample recording and editing software is also extremely good and as well as offering all the usual types of edit effects the software provided time stretching and time compression, frequency cut and boosting via software filters, and very powerful loop creation facilities.

The price of Audio Engineer has dropped considerably of late and this could mean that a new (16-bit?) offering is imminent.

AudioMaster IV

Available From: Antic Computer Systems
Price: £44

This is the Aegis release of RamScan's Audio Engineer Plus software and needless to say it's pretty good. In fact it is generally regarded as the best Amiga 8-bit sampling software around and certainly good value at the current price.

MegaMix

Available From: Indi Direct Mail
Price: £29.99

Budget priced sampling 8-bit hardware and software package. The hardware does what it is supposed to well enough but that's about all that can be said.

Music Kit

Available From: Power Computing
Price: £49

Generalised music package which includes an 8-bit hardware/software sampling system. As far as value for money goes the Music Kit compares well with other offerings in the same price range.

Sound Trap

Available From: Omega Projects
Price: £24.95

Budget mono 8-bit digitiser whose hardware includes a parallel port pass-through connector so it doesn't have to be unplugged to use a printer.

Sound Trap comes with its own software but most users prefer to use it with something like AudioMaster. The quoted price is for a ready-built unit, but if you are into do-it-yourself you can buy it in kit form and save yourself a fiver.

Stereo Master

Available From: HiSoft
Price:£39.95

An 8-bit stereo/mono sampling package which includes both hardware and software. Offers the same basic types of facilities, quality, and ease of use as products such as TechnoSound Turbo. Megalosound is a better buy.

Stereo Sampler 2

Available From: Trilogic
Price: £29.95

Not a bad offering by any means but it is essentially just the 8-bit digitising hardware that you buy. You do get some very basic sampling software but for any serious use you'll need a proper sample editing package.

Jargon

clipping A waveform distortion caused by a signal being too strong for the input circuitry of a recording or sampling device. The result is a poor quality sound.

fragmentation As a hard disk is used and files are created and deleted, pockets of empty disk space are formed. Because new data is stored in the first areas of empty space that are found, files are broken up into sections that are physically remote from each other. This fragmentation means that it takes longer to both store newer data and retrieve it, so the result is that the hard disk appears to slow down.

IFF 8SVX This is the IFF (Interchange File Format) type used for storing sound samples.

Digital Sound Studio DSS8+

Available From: Silica Systems
Price: £69

This is the recently upgraded version of the popular GVP DSS8 8-bit sampling system whose hardware now comes in a clear see-through plastic case. DSS8+ is well thought of, has reasonable documentation, and includes things like software controlled input levels and microphone/line switches (which makes it easy to adjust input signal strengths). The upgraded software now includes an ARexx interface.

Obviously with the arrival of numerous 16-bit boards a new 8-bit system would appear to face an up-hill battle, but rest assured in the field of 8-bit sampling DSS8+ is among the best in the business.

The real attraction of the system is its all-in-one approach with sampling, editing and song construction all part of the same system, which evolves as you progress through the production process.

Fortunately the software has adopted the familiar tracker format so MED fans won't have any problem adjusting to the program.

In short, if you're looking for an 8-bit solution to your particular sampling problems it's ideal.



Datel stereo sampler

Available From: Datel Electronics
Price: £49.95

Eight-bit sampling hardware and software package.

WaveTools

Available From Blittersoft
Price £349.95

This is a brand new 16-bit audio card that works with the A3000, the A4000, and accelerated A1500 or A2000 Amigas. A full review can be found in this very issue, so there's little point in going on about it here, is there?

Megalosound

Available From: HiSoft
Price: £34.95

This new 8-bit budget sampling system comes with a well built cartridge (fitted with a volume control) and a good manual. The software provides waveform printing, special effects, a stand alone sample player, and even direct-to-disk sampling. It's an ideal choice for the newcomer to sampling who doesn't want to spend the earth.



buster

loop A portion of a sample that is repeated to either sustain a note or create some special effect.

RAM scanning A facility which allows you to scan through the Amiga's memory and, by "playing" the data, look for sound samples. The act of extracting the samples from memory is usually called "ripping".

raw sample A copy of the byte values of a sound waveform just as they appear in memory as opposed to a sample stored in a specially designed file structure such as IFF 8SVX.

re-sampling Converting the waveform data of a sample taken at one frequency to the equivalent values at another fre-

Recording to disk

Most sound sampling systems store and edit the data they collect in the Amiga's chip memory, restricting the sample size to the amount of chip memory available. Reading samples and placing them directly onto disk eliminates this restriction but it's not easy to do and, as always, there is a price to pay.

Firstly, you need a hard disk. Without exception, direct-to-disk recording and playback always refers to hard disk use. Floppy drives are just not fast enough to perform this sort of magic, though a number of PD utilities exist to enable low quality sampling to floppy.

Secondly, you will find that with the lower cost packages the maximum sampling rate obtainable is considerably lower, and is often less than half that obtainable with the conventional memory-based approach.

Thirdly the performance of any direct-to-disk system is going to vary according to the speed of the hard disk, and the extent of its fragmentation. Lastly, this sort of hard disk use is very read/write intensive and slightly more error prone than conventional disk use.

It is best to create a separate partition for direct-to-disk sampling because if something untoward does happen you will then only lose the data associated with that partition.

A number of 8-bit sound samplers now provide direct-to-disk facilities, but at present there are no cheap equivalent 16-bit products. This, however, is an area that is definitely on the move and new offerings are just around the corner.

Remember however that 16-bit sound sampling hardware may not be the end of the expense – top of the range 16-bit sampling packages like the SunRize AD516 need to be used with fast Amigas and fast, high-capacity hard disks.

After your very first minute of CD quality stereo (two tracks sampled at 44.1kHz) you will find that 10 megabytes of storage space have gone. It's quite likely that newer, low cost, 16-bit boards are still going to need the support of powerful Amigas to get the best from them.

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HOW 2 create a leaflet

Ben Pointer takes us on a step-by-step guide to using this month's CoverDisk in the production of a simple leaflet

The best way to learn how to use any program is to roll up your sleeves and dive in. Using The Publisher, like any DTP package, can be confusing at first, so we've chosen the format of a simple one-step-at-a-time tutorial which should see us create our first simple project, a single page leaflet.

All keyboard short-cuts for menu options are shown in brackets. For example (Amiga-P) means hold down the right Amiga key – the key directly to the right of the spacebar – and while still holding down the right Amiga key, press the P key. OK, let's get started!

Select Add from the Page menu (Amiga-P), click the A4 option and then click OK. From the Magnification sub-menu in the Preferences menu select Full Width (Amiga-W). From the Measurement sub-menu in the Preferences menu select Inches/Points.

From the Imposed Grid sub-menu in the Preferences menu select Define (Amiga-I). Click the 18 button, and then click Absolute. From the Graphic sub-menu of the External menu, select Import IFF. Use the file requester to find the file called TRA-LA.IFF on the CoverDisk. Click once on the filename, then click OK. Notice that the name of the file appears in the tags list to the left of the page.

From the Import Text sub-menu of the External menu, select Generic. Use the file requester to find the file called VENUE.TXT on the CoverDisk. Click once on the filename, and then click OK. Notice that the name of the file appears in the tags list to the left of the page.

Make sure the Null Pointer gadget is selected (the arrow gadget at top left) and then from the Imposed Grid sub-menu of the Preferences menu select Temporary Show (Amiga-T). Click once on the Rectangular Box Creation gadget (top left in the lower bank of tools). Move the mouse to position the crosshairs at 1in down the page (the Y direction) and 0.25in in from the left (the X direction).

The crosshairs position is constantly updated in the rulers above and to the left of the page. Because you imposed a grid during preparation, the crosshairs will move in 0.25in steps, making it easier for you to position them accurately. Click the left mouse button when you have the crosshairs at the correct position.

Now move the crosshairs to 7in down the page and 8in across the page (about 0.25in in from the right, that is). Click the left mouse button again. A bounding box will appear on the page.

Click the grey area in the Screen Position gadget (just above the tags list) to move the view to the bottom half of the page. Click on the Box Moving gadget (bottom left in the lower bank of tools). The box you have just created is now attached to the mouse.

Move the box so that its bottom edge is positioned at 10in down the page, ensuring that the left edge is still at 0.25in in from the left of the page. To place the box in its new position, click the left mouse button once. If you make a mistake, click the Box Moving gadget again and re-position the box again.

When you have the box positioned correctly, click the TRA-LA.IFF item in the tags list to place that graphic into that box. A grey rectangle will appear in the centre of the box. From the Graphics sub-menu of the Preferences menu, select Display Page to unhide the graphic.

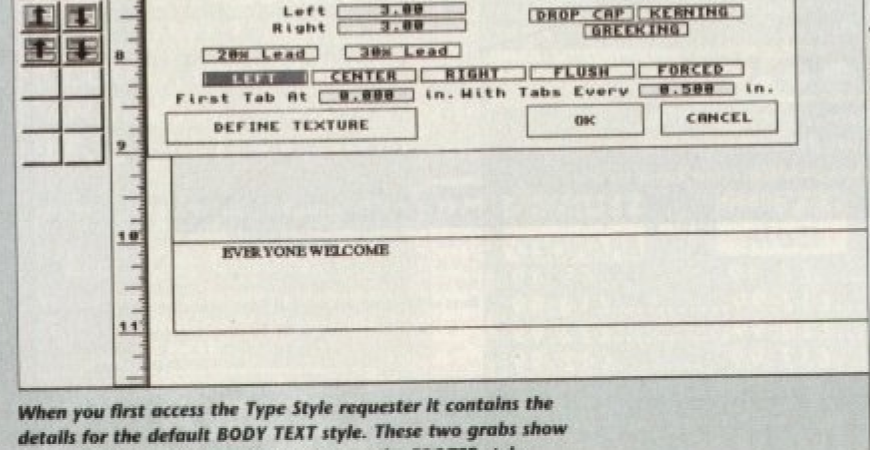
The graphic is not big enough for our needs. Select the Graphic Fitting gadget (bottom right in the lower bank of tools) to expand the graphic to fill the box we have created for it.

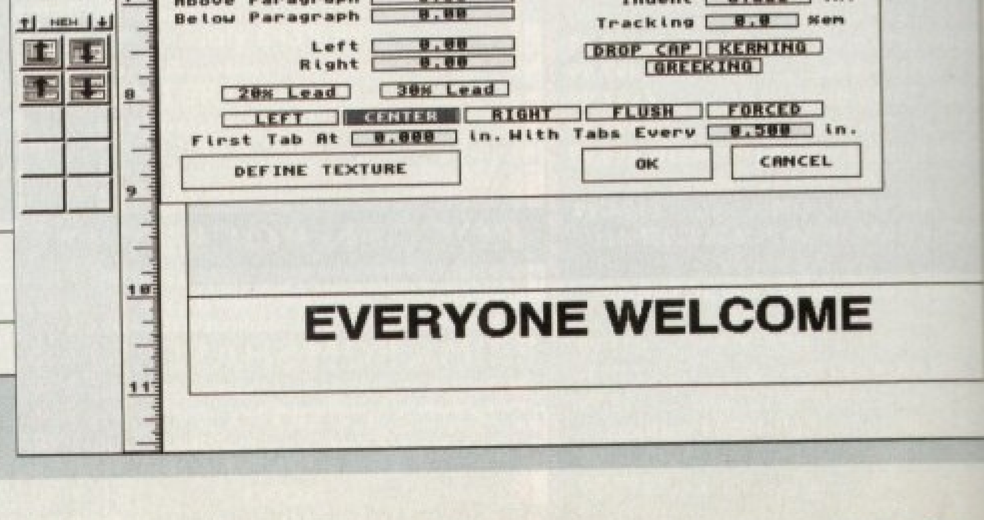
Now create a rectangular box whose top left position is X = 0.25in Y = 10in, and whose bottom right position is X = 8in Y = 11in. X means across the page, Y means down the page.

Click the big T (for Text) gadget in the upper bank of tools. A small text gadget will appear underneath the lower bank of tools. Type EVERYONE WELCOME. Finish text entry by clicking the Null Pointer gadget.

SET STYLE

The text is set in the default BODY TEXT style. To make it look the way we want it to look, we must first set up a new style. Click the Paragraph Mode gadget (to the right of the Null Pointer). Click the NEW gadget that is below the tags list. Into the text gadget that appears, type FOOTER and press the Return key. Now select Alter Current from the Type Style menu. In the Font section at the top of the





When you first access the Type Style requester it contains the details for the default BODY TEXT style. These two grabs show how it looks before and after setting up the FOOTER style

Type Style requester, click the H gadget and then click the downward pointing arrow to the right of the alphabet. The typeface name Helvetica-Bold should appear in the gadget above the alphabet. Click the 36 button to select the text size.

In the Spacing section, click in the Above Line gadget, press Amiga-X and then Return to set it to zero. Do the same to all the gadgets in this section, and in the three gadgets to the right. Select the CENTER gadget towards the foot of the requester, and then OK.

Click in the EVERYONE WELCOME box on the page to highlight that text, then click on the FOOTER item in the tags list to set the text in the style we have just created.

Click the Null Pointer gadget and then click the grey area in the Screen Position gadget so that you are now looking at the top half of the page.

VANISHED

Create a rectangular box whose top left position is X = 0.25in Y = 0.5in, and whose bottom right position is X = 8in Y = 5.5in. Once drawn, move this box so that its bottom edge is 4.75in down from the top of the page. This means the top of the box will be pushed off the top of the page. Don't panic, that's what we want to happen.

Click on the T gadget, type in Street Party! and click the Null Pointer to finish. At this point you can't see the text on the page. Don't worry about it.

Click the Paragraph Mode gadget and then NEW (below the tags list). Type HEADER into the text gadget, press Return and then select Alter Current from the Type Style menu. Change the Font to Bookman-DemiItalic, size 72, zero all the Spacing gadgets except for Below Line, into which you should enter -20. Click CENTER and OK.

Now click in the Street Party! box on the page and click HEADING in the tags list. You should now see the heading appear at the top of the page.

That text box is obscuring the top of the graphic below, so click on the Null Pointer and from the Box menu select Alter Active. In the Box Description requester that appears, click on the Transparency gadget (the right-hand of the upper two gadgets) so that it shows a grey box on a grey background.

EXIT

Clear out the X-Axis Scale gadget (click in it and press Amiga-X), type 1.2 into it and press Return. Clear out the Y-Axis Scale gadget, type 4 and press Return. Click OK to exit the requester and apply the changes we have made.

Create a rectangular box at X = 0.5 Y = 4.25 top left, X = 2 Y = 5 bottom right, then click on the VENUE.TXT item in the tags list.

The text is set in the default BODY TEXT style. Select the Paragraph Mode gadget and then Alter Current from the Type Style menu. Change the Font to Helvetica, size 12, change the First Line Indent to zero, then click OK.

Click the Null Pointer and create a rectangular box at X=6 Y=5 top left, X=8 Y=7 bottom right. Click the T gadget, type BRING A BOTTLE! and click the Null Pointer to finish.

Create a new style called BOTTLE in NewCenturySchlbk-Bold, size 24, centred, and apply this style to the text.

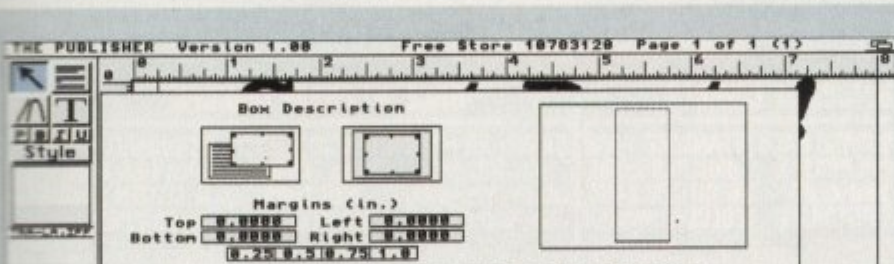
To get the three words on to separate lines, click the T gadget, click in the BOTTLE box on the page, move the cursor in the text gadget until it is just before the A, press Return; move the cursor to just after the A, press Return again. Click the Null Pointer to finish. All that remains it to print the document. From the Print Page sub-menu of the document menu, select Final. Make sure that in the text gadget under Output File Name is the word PSC:. Click the PSC: gadget (top right of the requester) if necessary.

Change the Width to 8.2in and the Height to 10.5in. This normally results in a correctly positioned printout. If the top of your page is not printed in the correct position, enter a smaller Height to move it down the page, a larger Height to move it up the page (don't ask me, it's just the way it works).

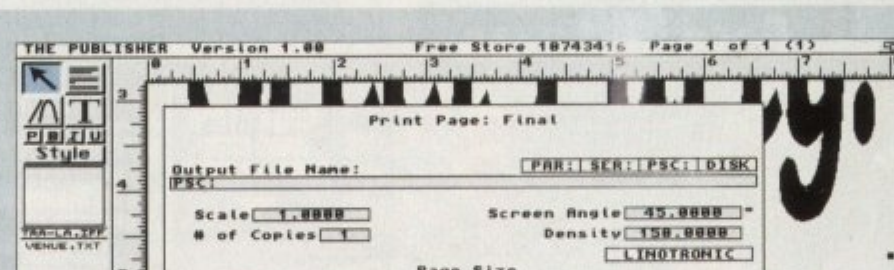
Density, dithering method, printer driver and so on are selected in the normal way via the Workbench printer preferences programs.



With luck and a decent printer, your leaflet should look like this



In the Box Description requester you can make a box transparent, give it a fill colour (Define Texture), plus rotate and scale the contents of the box



The Publisher prints to dot matrix (Preferences) printers via the PublisherScript PostScript interpreter. To these ends you must print to PSC:, not to PRT:. If you are using a PostScript printer you may print direct to PAR:. Print to DISK if you intend to take the PostScript to a bureau for printing

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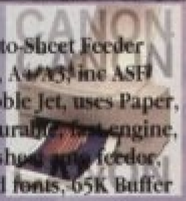
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Aquatic acoustics

Is WaveTools the sampler we've all been waiting for, or just another expensive add-on? Paul Austin auditions the latest in 16-bit sound

Ever since the arrival of CD, 16-bit has been the standard to which we've all aspired. Unfortunately, for the vast majority such high ambitions have remained well beyond the reach of the average bank balance.

Thankfully the financial tide is turning courtesy of WaveTools. Like most 16-bit systems the hardware requires a Zorro slot which limits it to desktop machines such as the A2000, 3000 and 4000 running 68030 processors or above.

Assuming you have the necessary hardware, installation is a simple matter of slotting in the card. Adding the necessary I/O phono connections is slightly unusual in that they're attached to a blanking plate which connects to the card via a short cable.

INSTALLATION

When the card, blanking plate and audio leads are in place it's time to add the software by simply dragging the icons onto your hard disk along with a single library file which is added automatically through an install icon.

Although a hard disk wasn't listed as an essential it's arguably the most important element of all. Like the SunRize 16/12-bit samplers, WaveTools is a direcf-to-disk system, but unlike SunRize it appears far more comfortable with slower drives, though it must be stressed that WaveTools as it stands is a far simpler system.

In short, the difference between the two is that while the SunRize boards are a combination of multi-track recording, mixing, and mastering WaveTools is essentially a mastering system with limited mixing abilities.

Like the Clarity 16-bit sampler WaveTools opens on a Workbench screen with a small control panel handling an array of samples. Not surprisingly you can open as many windows as you want, cutting, pasting, copying and mixing between them as required.

Just like its innumerable 8-bit counterparts you're given the ability to mark and play regions via the usual click and drag mouse manoeuvres, and you're free to initiate playback from any point. But of course before you can edit it's a good idea to have a sample on hand.

RECORDING

Clicking on record initiates the process, though before you can import anything you have to define the file name or opt for the monitor screen which allows you to adjust the various I/O signals thereby avoiding clipping problems during recording.

If all's well you can return to the main window, re-select record, and then name your file, after which you're taken to a separate record screen to define the sample rate – right up to the maximum 48kHz of DAT. Here again you can monitor the input strength and make any final adjustments via a small gain control.

Once you're happy, the last job is to define the length of the sample. An estimate of the required storage space is provided so you shouldn't suffer any unexpected storage problems, but considering one minute at CD quality stereo eats over 11Mb of hard disk space that's perhaps a bit optimistic.

PROBLEMS

As for sound quality there are no complaints whatsoever. In fact it ranks alongside any direct-to-disk system on the market. Alas good sound quality alone doesn't make a great sampler.

Although mentioned briefly, mixing is a real let-down. As you'd expect, the process allows two samples to be combined into a new super sample. Unfortunately mixing within WaveTools is at best a hit and miss affair.

The system can only play one stereo sample at a time, so there's no means of monitoring both samples in real time. As a result you're forced to adjust the levels of each via small graphic oscilloscopes which move in response to accompanying sliders.

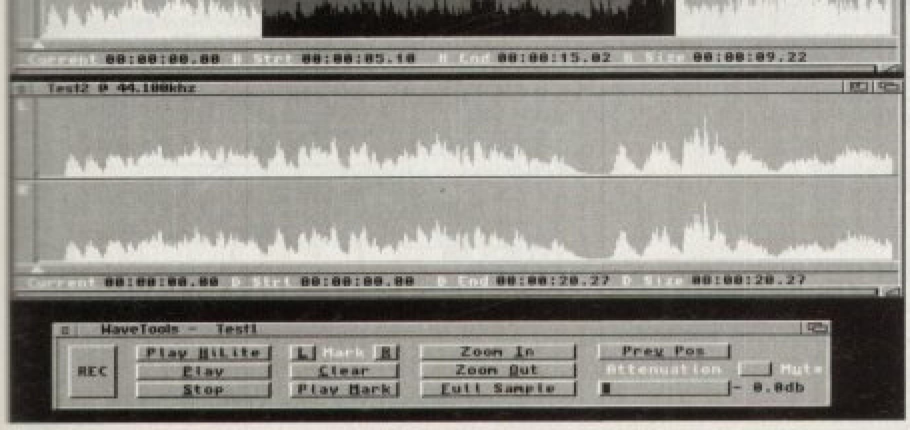
The user is consequently forced into a bit of graphical guess work which more often than not is woefully inadequate. Worse still, it is impossible to monitor the volume changes prior to mixing, even on an individual basis. Fortunately an undo option is provided, but this requires yet another file on disk which of course eats up yet more valuable disk space.

With the aforementioned limitations it would appear there's little to recommend WaveTools. Thankfully however an imminent update could turn the tide and allow the board's excellent sound quality to team up with much improved functionality.

As you peruse the glossy folds of *AC*, the finishing touches are being applied to an add-on card which will provide a DSP, SMPTE timecode and most important of all real time eight-track recording and mixing. This new add-on, entitled the RTX module, will ship as a £299.95 upgrade which hopefully will address the shortfalls of the existing system.

As it stands it's fairly difficult to recommend WaveTools to any would-be investor. However, if and when the new RTX module arrives it may well be a totally different story.

If the promised module and WaveTools combo ship at present suggested price of £499 they could well take the Amiga music world by storm, but until they arrive I suggest you save up and look out for a follow-up review in a forthcoming issue.



Great sound quality, but I'm afraid the missing module does let the system down

SYSTEM ESSENTIALS
RED = Essential YELLOW = Recommended

Hard drive
Zorro required

The bottom line

Product: WaveTools
Supplier: Blittersoft
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Implementation 6
Ease of use 10
Value for money 5
Overall 6

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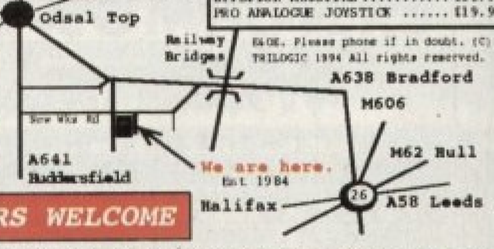
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Comatose Commodore?

Ezra Surf's Postbag

ESP

Star Letter

Many of us are waiting with baited breath for news of Commodore's future, but there sure is a whole lot of hot air being passed around in Amiga magazines about how CD32 is going to pull Commodore's bottom line out of the red and into the black.

And if you believe that I would suggest that you are a prime candidate for a sci-fi RPG-induced psychosis, because that's what those deus-ex-machine stories are: science fiction.

Remember CDTV? Nuff said.

It really galls me to see you reporters trying to convince us that Commodore is "restructuring" and "streamlining" and in an excellent position to take on the competition. That's like saying the Titanic was restructuring its flotation potential to challenge the competition for seafaring space.

I hate it when you say Commodore suffered losses due to the fluctuation of the international dollar value and the belt-tightening state of the world economy. That's the same kind of hype we accuse PC and Mac magazines of when they fail to report the Amiga's prowess.

Why can't you admit that Commodore suffered losses because Commodore's comatose leadership makes Moe, Larry, and Curly look like Mensa members? Why can't you just come out and say that Commodore's in deep trouble because the company's strategic planning is as intelligent and foresighted as Laurel and Hardy's attempt to move a piano? And why can't you tell us that Commodore's upper management are jumping out quicker than popping corn with no lid? Is it fear?

You know, for the last several years you have been urging us to hype the Amiga to our friends, to show its power to potential new users. In short, to do Commodore's marketing for them, and all in the name of loyalty to our favourite computer.

And we did.

Our user groups got involved in mall shows, multimedia expos, cable TV info-mercials, and a variety of other activities designed to promote the Amiga. As individuals, we became Amiga evangelists singing the praises of the miraculous machine to anyone who would listen (and many who wouldn't).

Now, we would like to challenge you. It's time for you to do your part to help the Amiga survive. We're asking you to start reporting the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Maintain your integrity as journalists and expose Commodore to some light. Use your journalistic talents to ferret out some real news instead of the hyper-hype we've been getting lately.

And when the truth comes to light, use the power of the press and call for the resignation of the current short-sighted, greed-addicted, self-destructive leaders of the company. Use your media influence to demand an end to this reign of stupidity at Commodore.

We've done our part. We bought stock. We voted. We marketed. Now how about doing your part? You've got the power.

Ciao for now.

Frank G Salvatini, Metropolitan Amiga Enthusiasts, Roselle, Illinois

There's no doubt that the efforts of enthusiasts and user groups have been invaluable to the promotion of the Amiga, but we too have been doing our part for five years, and if Commodore had listened to us there would have been, among other things, a model between the A1200 and A4000 with a faster processor and better expandability, the A1200 would have been released with a hard drive as standard instead of the stop-gap arrangement that Commodore managed months after the launch, and marketing would have concentrated on non-games areas.

In the past, Commodore have come under fire from most UK Amiga magazines, and we have criticised them for concentrating too much on games, failing to properly develop and market the Amiga's productivity talents, and leaving more or less all peripheral development to third parties.

In addition, we have expressed the belief that Amiga technology should be licensed to third parties in much the same way as IBM allowed clones to be built so that an aggressive Amiga market with cheaper Amigas and more models might develop. This finally happened in part recently when Commodore farmed out the development on the A4091 card.

However, we have also praised the release of the AGA machines as a step forward, CD32 as a solid attempt to win back bread and butter sales from the consoles, and the success of the Amiga in the multimedia and video industries.

Of course, most of the latter is down to the Amiga (courtesy of Scala and the Toaster) selling itself, but at least some sort of recognition of these markets has filtered through to Commodore's top brass.

What cannot be stomached is the fact that although gifted with the most successful 16-bit home computer of the 80s, massive sales of 14 million C64s and three million Amigas, Commodore still find themselves in 1994 back in the same position they were in 1987. Whether this can be attributed mostly to Commodore or the fierce competition depends on who you talk to, but look at the facts.

Since the original Amiga was launched with revolutionary technology, it has lost its technical lead and seen only one major development (AGA), yet the Macintosh, PC and, to a lesser extent, the consoles have come on in leaps and bounds.

From a position where the A1000 was competing with mostly green-screen PCs augmented by crass EGA graphics, the PC has advanced to a position where it enjoys fast 32-bit processors, cheap 16-bit video cards, and a foothold in markets well outside its original office stalking grounds.

The three years in which the A500 ruled the games playing world and sold itself without any help from Commodore seems to have produced an inertia and complacency from which the company have only recently roused themselves.

It is worrying that we are staking so much on the success of only two machines – CD32 and the A1200 – but this is more reason to talk the machine up than down.

We at AC have never taken a blindly optimistic or poodle-like approach to Commodore and we won't start now, but as consumer journalists it is not our job to stick the knife into a troubled company which still employs many a family's bread-winner. We are here to report and comment on market developments, test new equipment, and offer buying advice to our readers.

If this means criticising Commodore for mistakes in strategy or planning, we will do so, but don't expect any witch-hunts. Remember that in Salem, Massachusetts, the victims were mostly the innocent.

Buy direct

You discussed in your November issue the costs of buying goods from the USA, so you may like to know that there is a useful little book published on all the tricks necessary to purchase goods by mail order from the US.

The telephone call is often toll free, even from Europe, and you can use cheap rate after 8pm. Your comment on import duties is correct for hardware but at the moment software is duty free.

Carriage and insurance costs are around $5 per pound in weight and there are a number of stateside customer protection agencies in the event of anything going wrong. payment can usually be made by credit card.

The biggest obstacle to buying from overseas is the lack of information in magazines on what is available and at what cost. Is it not possible for magazines like yours to take advertising from US mail order companies?

The book to which I refer is called *Buying Direct from the USA* by Richard McBrien and can be bought from Running Heads International, Grove House, 82 East Dulwich Grove, London SE22 8TW.

A Baker, Fowey

Thanks for the information, which some of our more adventurous bargain seeking readers will no doubt find useful. We could take advertising from US mail order companies, but the truth is that the response to such adverts would most likely be much less than an advert in a US magazine and the mail order companies will place their ads where they will reap the best harvest.

We can't close the door on such a suggestion, and as the Amiga is stronger in Europe than in the US we may see some American mail order companies taking the plunge, but don't expect to see it for a while.

Crass crossheads

I have been reading your magazine for three years now, and I've finally had enough of your headings in the letters pages and elsewhere. If I see another variation on "printer problems", "mighty monitor", or any of the usual alliterative nonsense, I shall scream.

Alliteration is an old and wonderful tradition in English verse, but if Chaucer had known it would one day be used so widely and with such apparent lack of thought he would have jacked it in and become a stonemason.

Can you please put a stop to it?

Paul English, Stratford

I am pleased that you have perused our paltry pages so painstakingly that you should detect the deluge of distinctly dodgy designatory headings.

We try to keep the crossheads catchy and stuff our subheads with spice, otherwise our verbage might very well tumble into total tedium.

It is meet, though, that this missive should mull over our meanderings and we shall endeavour in future to restrict such risible rantings and render them rare.

Oh, and as far as I remember it was Wyatt rather than Chaucer who revived the alliterative tradition, though I've been wrong in the past, like when I bought Commodore shares... (that's enough pointed satire – Ed).

Poetic angst

Here's something a bit different for you to print, a poem by my wife Ruth Le-Vallois about me and my similarly Amiga-besotted friend Joe Sokolov. It's called *Amiga Amigos*.

Maurice has got an Amiga
His Amiga is his amigo
And he has an Amiga amigo
His amigo's name is Joe

This Amiga amigo Joe
Has an Amiga too
But poor Ruth hasn't got one
And she is feeling blue

Mo phones Joe then Joe phones Mo
And they call each other back
Ruth can't get a word in
It's an Amiga that she lacks

They visit to talk Amiga talk
About a virus, games and disks
They discuss their floppy things
And games where they take risks

Now what if Ruth slipped a disk
And lost her arm
Or if she caught a virus
Would that interest Amiga man?

Would one half of the amigos
Want to speak to his wife then?
Only if it's Amiga talk
Would Mo show interest again

Ruth wants to be Mo's amigo
Please Maurice be her chum
Cos if you don't she'll stick
Yer Amiga up yer bum!

Maurice and Ruth Le-Vallois, Paisley

It's nice to see that poetry is still alive and well in Paisley, even if St Mirren's hopes of playing some decent football aren't. Where are you now Alex Ferguson?

As the poem is in a ballad form, why not put it to music? It would fit any traditional folk ballad, even Greensleeves, and you never know when a number one hit might be around the corner. If the smurfs can reach number one, so can the Amiga Amigos.

Young Maxwell

I like making newspapers. I've got an A500 Plus and I would like to know if there are any programs I could make newspapers with.

I'll just explain to you what I'm looking for. I would like the program so I could move pictures and articles around. I would also like to know how I could put photos onto the screen so I could print them onto paper. Please could you answer my question?

Colin Barrett (aged ten), Thetford

You have a spiralling ambition for one so young, but there's no reason why you shouldn't be able to create newsletters or newspapers on your A500 Plus. The best program for you would be PageSetter 2 or 3, and I'd advise you to drop heavy hints to your parents about adding a bit more memory to your Amiga.

After all, it's money well spent. If you can learn the rudiments of layout and page design at the tender age of ten, you could be the next press baron. Just don't go the way of Cap'n Bob, eh?

Got something to say through the pages of AC? Ezra Surf is our mailman, dedicated to reading your letters and selecting the most interesting for publication. Drop him a line at:

Ezra Surf's Postbag , Amiga Computing Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP

Please don't enclose saes as Ezra just hasn't got enough paper to reply personally. He might also have to shorten your letters, so don't be offended if you end up getting the chop.

Future plans

I have spent the past few months pondering over an increasingly complicated dilemma. I am very much into desktop video and especially 3D animation. At present I have an A4000/030 with 120Mb hard drive and 6Mb RAM with a 25MHz FPU.

I have made the investment of buying a copy of Real 3D v2, setting me back by the whopping sum of £340, and I would recommend the program to anyone, even a beginner, for as long as they possess a great deal of time and patience its power will eventually reap great rewards.

There are, however, a number of things I would like to buy. I feel restricted by the AGA chip set and am looking to buy a 24-bit graphics board. The OpalVision board seems very good, especially with the forthcoming add-ons. I saw that Indie were advertising it for under £350 and I'm mightily tempted.

However, with the advent of EGS-based retargetable graphics boards I wonder whether or not I should wait for a suitable board with these features? I need a fast and powerful paint program for the board which supports the Genius digitising tablet I'll be buying soon, and realistic simulation of drawing materials with sensitivity controls is a must.

With the AAA chip set on the horizon, the need for a 24-bit board at all is called into question. Do you think it will be wasted cash or that the next range of Amigas will be so highly priced that changing to them will be much more expensive than buying a graphics board?

I also need a modem to contact the Activa BBS, and another 4Mb SIMM. My current budget is £600 but has the potential to expand greatly over the coming years. Bearing in mind that I want to work to professional standards, what advice can you give me?

Quentin Brown, Chichester

The AAA chip set will most probably not appear in a new Amiga until the autumn, so why wait? You have a specific requirement which is unlikely to change, so it is best to buy the equipment to do that job now and stop worrying about future developments.

Your machine, the A4000, is the best DTV workstation available for less than £3,000, and with the addition of a suitable video card it should be capable of superb professional results, but note the use of the term "video card" as opposed to "graphics card".

Most of the RTG cards available are purely display cards with little or no video friendliness, though a couple now have video encoders. The OpalVision system is a much better choice for DTV, but I would advise you to wait until the video add-on pack is available and has been reviewed. We have heard many promises from Centaur, but nothing has come of them yet.

You will have problems with your choice of tablet. The Genius is a good low cost unit but is not used much by commercial artists and is therefore under-supported. A better (and much more expensive) choice would be the Wacom tablet from Silica Systems which is supported by TV Paint.

Modems are easy. Go for the Sportster or one of the Supra v42bis models as they are reasonably priced and pretty quick. Downloading large Jpeg or object files can take some time with a slower modem.

Shuttle fix

Having just upgraded to an A4000/030 with 120Mb hard drive and 4Mb RAM I was just a little annoyed that Shuttle wouldn't run or work. Anyway, I have managed to get it up and running on my hard drive, and for anyone else who's having problems, here's how I did it.

First, boot from hard drive then use the HDInstall program on the Shuttle disk. Once it's installed you need a copy of degrader (given away on an AC CoverDisk), which you should copy complete with icon into the Shuttle drawer.

Once this is all done, boot from the HD, open degrader, select NoFastMem, Privelige errors, nocache, noburst, and switch all the drives except df0: over to df4: then reboot and click on the Shuttle icon, which should then work as if it's on an A500.

Iain Lippitt, Shrewsbury

Thanks for sharing your exhaustive research with the rest of us, Iain, but I can't help wondering why people bother. If the game works as if it was on an A500, the extra power of the A4000/030 is wasted. Nice one, Virgin.

CLUB corner

This month's user group is in the north-east way up in Sunderland, where Newcastle Brown Ale takes preference to spritzers and football is best not mentioned in polite conversation. The group has a disk magazine called Blitter, and is striving to offer help on such varied topics as video, DTP, programming, and graphics.

If you want to know more about this group, send a stamped addressed envelope and a blank disk to:

P Kruman
213 Fordfield Road
Sunderland
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In return, you'll receive a copy of the disk magazine, information about the club, and a list of AGA-specific PD.

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2Mb	0Mb	£349	INC VAT - AMC 1749
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2Mb	85Mb	£549	INC VAT - AMC 1786
2Mb	127Mb	£579	INC VAT - AMC 1828
2Mb	209Mb	£649	INC VAT - AMC 1910

AMIGA 1200 SPECIFICATIONS
- 68020EC Processor - 14.19MHz Clock Speed
- 32-bit Architecture/2Mb Chip RAM
- Amiga DOS v3.0/Built-in TV Modulator
- AA Chip Set/16.8 Million Colours
- 1 x 32-Bit CPU/RAM Expansion Slot
- PCMCIA Smart Card Slot
- 96 Key Keyboard with Numeric Keypad
- 2½" Internal IDE Hard Drive Options
- 1 Year On-site Warranty

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25MHz 68030EC

RAM	HD	Price
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2Mb	130Mb	£949
4Mb	80Mb	£999
4Mb	130Mb	£1049
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4Mb	340Mb	£1249
4Mb	540Mb	£1499

25MHz 68040

RAM	HD	Price
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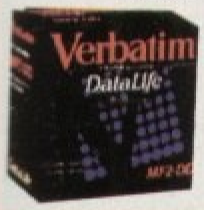
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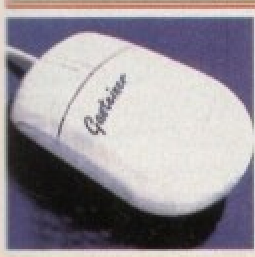
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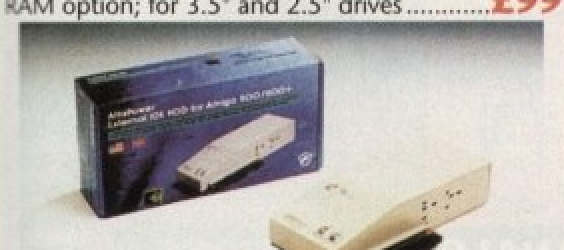


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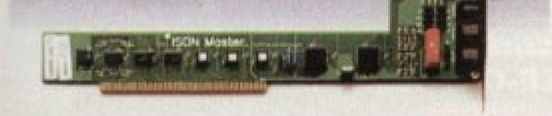


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Autoboot, Autoconfig and Zero wait states

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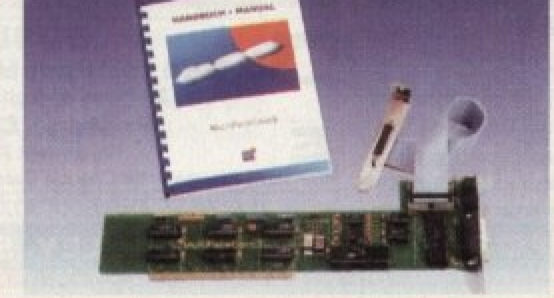


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Autoboot, Autoconfig and Zero wait states

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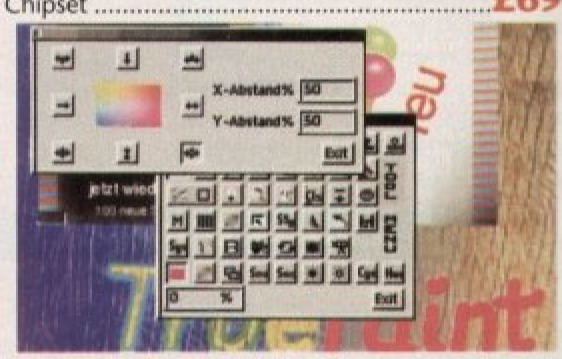
System requirements:-

- ★ GigaMem works with all AMIGA <R> computers with MMU (Memory Management Unit): i.e. Amiga's with 68020 or 68030 accelerator and MMU.
- ★ No restriction on type of HD controller and hard disk.
- ★ GigaMem is compatible with Kickstart 1.2/1.3 and 2.x.

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FEATURES:

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- ★ Airbrush with adjustable spray functions and stipples.
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- ★ Slant, rotate, scale.
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- ★ Lightable function for editing animation pictures.
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SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:

- ★ All Amiga with AA chipset, e.g. Amiga 1200/4000.
- ★ Kickstart™ 3.0 or above.
- ★ Minimum 2Mb graphics memory.
- ★ Additional memory recommended.

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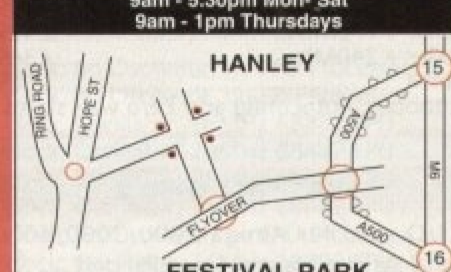
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Lightning never strikes twice... unless it's in the Amiga's premier technical letters page, that is



ACAS

AMIGA COMPUTING ADVICE SERVICE

Which method?

Q I am a graphics artist who has just cottoned on to the Amiga as a cheap source of excellent graphics software, and I'm particularly interested in ray tracing, which I've never made use of before.

My problem is that most Amigas, even the A4000/040, seem fairly slow compared to the machines used in my industry, and I need to produce graphics quickly. What is my best bet?

Is there a particular package which you can recommend as faster than the others or are there short-cuts? Can I add more power than the 68040? If these questions can't be answered I may have to forego the superb cheap software, so please give it a try.

Gareth Mayhew, Dudley

A *In your industry, you are probably used to using £70,000 worth of Silicon Graphics machines running at 150 million instructions per second (Mips) and upwards of 20 million floating point operations per second (Mflops). The 68040 runs at about 17 Mips and 2.5 Mflops, so it's no wonder you're concerned about speed.*

Basically, there are two options. You can opt for Lightwave 3.0, which will cost $2,000 when bought with a Video Toaster, or think about a rendering board.

Lightwave is an NTSC package which requires tweaking to produce PAL video-sized images and as it is bundled with the Video Toaster it is much more expensive, but it is a lot faster than most other Amiga packages.

A new dongle, called LightRave, will enable the use of Lightwave on a machine without the Toaster, but you still have to buy the software from NewTek and at the moment it isn't clear if software upgrades will be sold to Europe as NewTek are a little miffed with LightRave. Check out the LightRave review two issues back for details.

Rendering cards based on ultra-fast parallel processors are being developed, and we hope to review a working transputer card some time in the next three months, but the Screamer card for Video Toaster users, and others based on the TI340x0 family are still dreamware.

With a parallel processing card, the Amiga should be able to work at 200 Mips (using a single T9000 chip) and above, but software has to be re-compiled to make use of these boards.

Keep an eye on future issues for more information, as this is an exciting new area we will be watching with interest.

US import

Q My father is going to the United States soon and I was wondering if I could get an A1200 from there as the price is lower. Problem is, I don't want to spend over £200 and find that it does not work here in Britain, so can you please help me?

I read the letter "Brazil Nut" in issue 67 and found out that disks can be wiped out by X-Ray machines, so how can I bypass this if I am buying a complete unopened pack and would need an adaptor?

I would also like to know why you do not reply personally to letters even if you receive a stamped addressed envelope. Is it a ploy to make the writer of the letter buy the magazine to read the reply?

Sharad Bhardwaj, Nuneaton

A *The A1200 itself doesn't care whether it's in the US or the UK, but a different power supply is required for the UK. You can get one from CPC Ltd on 0772 654455.*

Remember that if you return to the UK, the A1200 will be subject to 4.9 per cent import duty and 17.5 per cent VAT, a calculation which you should make before deciding whether you'll save money. In the end, you may find that you spend as much as you would in Britain.

On the other hand, software is duty free, so you could make a killing by buying some US software while you're over there. The only problem you may find is that most software is supplied in two versions, one for NTSC, one for PAL, but it might be possible to lay your hands on the PAL version if you ask the salesperson.

Airport X-ray machines have no harmful effects on floppy disks, CDs, audio tapes, or exposed film, so there's nothing to worry about on that score. Even if they did, wouldn't it be a good idea just to open the A1200 box and take the disks out? Just a thought.

Finally, we don't accept SAEs because if we replied to every letter personally there would be no time to write the magazine. Besides, a question answered in the ACAS pages is a problem shared with thousands of readers, whereas a personal reply would benefit only one person.

Cracked tube

Q My monitor, a 14in Goldstar model taken from a second-hand PC (the casing of which now serves as a wonderful foot stool) has started to develop a nasty black line in the middle of the screen. The line appears after about ten minutes of use and gradually spreads from a single pixel in width to about three millimetres or so.

I've tried the various controls on the front of the monitor without success and now fear I may have to buy a 1942 or something. Is there anything I can do? Strangely enough, after some warm re-boots the line goes thin again, while at other times it stays the same size.

Peter Walker, Kempston

A *That's a weird one, isn't it? If there was a problem with your monitor's tube, you would expect the screen to bow or bend, or for the colours to bleed, but lines which gradually widen are something I've not come across before.*

If there's only one solid black line it is probably caused by a problem with the signal to the guns in the CRT which makes them skip that part of the screen. This is a modestly optimistic sign because it might mean you won't have to have the whole tube assembly replaced.

Try the Amiga with a TV and if the problem doesn't repeat itself you should have the monitor looked at by a repair company. With any luck there will be a cheap answer to the problem, and at any rate it should cost less than a new 1942.

Lightning strike

Q Regarding the hard drive failure of A Luszjar of Birmingham in your Christmas issue, I would like to advise him and all your readers that lightning can play extreme havoc with a computer and with all sensitive electronic equipment such as TV sets, modems, short wave radios, and so on.

A direct strike or even a near hit can send surges of current on the power mains, phone lines, cable TV, or any outside aerials of a magnitude that cannot be suppressed by any known surge protec- ➤

Overscan blues

Q I am the not-so-proud owner of a new 1942 monitor which I use with my A1200, and even with the patch to cure the overscan problem I find that many programs still run askew.

Several open screens which are an inch or more from the centre of the monitor screen, and this often stops me from getting to some icons and buttons.

What's the problem? I've tried fiddling with overscan till the cows come home and all that happens is that the screen jumps from one side to the other depending on the program I'm using.

Sally Wilson, Dundee

A *Are you sure you set the original overscan settings properly? Go back to the beginning and make sure you have copied the new monitor drivers to your Devs:Monitors drawer, then set overscan again, being careful that text and graphics overscan are set to the same values.*

If some programs still won't behave, you may be using software which isn't happy with AGA screens, a problem which is especially acute when you use Productivity mode.

Try holding down both mouse buttons at boot-up and selecting the Enhanced Chip Set option before using one of the troublesome packages, and if this works you will have found the problem.

Otherwise, you may have to change your screen mode to hi-res no flicker, which is a better approximation of PAL hi-res interlace than Productivity and should always be used if you have mode promotion turned on.

Camera obscura

Q I have a project in mind which involves my class of sixth formers in multimedia of a sort in that I want them to use our computers to put together a presentation on the benefits of the local area. This will mean using whatever pictures we can and scanning them in using a colour hand scanner.

My problem is that the best photos I have are all on colour transparency and I have yet to devise a way to scan these in using the hand scanner. Any ideas?

George Parsons, Peterborough

A *Scanning transparencies using a hand scanner will never produce good results but can be made to produce at least something.*

First of all, as transparencies are, well, transparent, you can't rely on the scanning head's light source. This will pass through the trannie and reflect back to the scanner causing a refraction pattern on the finished scan.

To keep this unavoidable problem to a minimum, take the tranny from its plastic holder and keep it as flat as possible on the scanning surface, then try a variety of shiny and matt surfaces on which to lie it.

Using a second bright light shining at 45 degrees from in front of the scanner head sometimes helps, but the only way to scan trannies without paying for an expensive GT6500 with transparency unit is to experiment, and even then you won't get great results.



ACAS

AMIGA COMPUTING ADVICE SERVICE

You got problems too? Then drop a line to Amiga Computing Advice Service, Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP and we'll move heaven and earth to help in these columns. But sorry, we cannot reply personally, so save those SAEs.

➤

tors. Many a computer has been burned out, all chips fried, circuit boards charred, and the like.

Lightning surges can jump over on/off switches, and a telephone line surge can go through a modem into the computer wiping out all in its path. Therefore, even turning off the computer during a lightning storm will not guarantee its protection.

You must unplug from the mains and the phone line and any other wiring coming into the house. This must be done at the first sign of distant thunder, and preferably before when there is advanced warning from the weather bureau.

You should also avoid using the telephone during a storm as a strike can be fatal. I always unplug my computer from the mains and the phone line when I will be away for more than a day and it is considered good practice for all to follow this procedure.

I have a Masters degree in Electronic Engineering and have done extensive research into lightning dangers. Mr Luszjar, far from being unlucky, is lucky that his whole computer was not frizzled and that he himself was not personally injured.

It is not wise or safe for you to advise your readers that it's OK to operate computers with lightning around.

Stu Casper, Taylorsville, North Carolina

A *We stand corrected, and if research on lightning has produced statistics or evidence showing how computers are affected, we would be grateful if you could send it to us so we can let the rest of the readers know.*

I suppose it's fortunate for people in the UK that we generally don't see electric storms of great ferocity and that lightning injuries are rare, a fact which can perhaps lead to a little complacency.

Which files?

Q I have just moved from the ST to the A1200 and I'm feeling a little at sea. my problems begin when I try to copy programs over from one disk to another (especially CoverDisks) as I'm never sure which files need to be transferred or where to find them (not a problem on the ST).

Have you any general tips on how to set about copying programs from one place to another and installing them onto hard disk? How about a long article on the subject or has that been done in a previous issue?

Peter Bardon, Bradford

A *We've had a few series for beginners on the general makeup of an AmigaDOS floppy disk, and this should have given most who followed them a few pointers, but we've never written an article on this specific subject.*

You'll find a couple of hints on the Getting Started page printed every month with our CoverDisk instructions but there's one simple tip that can save much hassle.

Get yourself a copy of SnoopDos or a similar program which is designed to keep track of most AmigaDOS operations and report their progress. In other words, such a program can often tell you which libraries a program is opening when it runs and which of these it can't find. Once you discover the culprit missing files it is easy to correct the fault.

SnoopDos is a shareware program which has appeared on past AC CoverDisks and can be found in most decent PD libraries.

Bonus format

Q I only recently upgraded to Workbench 2.04 by fitting a ROM chip and buying some Workbench disks, and the improvement over my old WB1.3 system is fantastic.

Only one thing mystifies me now, and that's a comment I read in another magazine concerning Fast File System. The article claimed that you could get more onto a disk if you used FFS but failed to say how. I'm reluctant to buy a whole book just to learn this trick, so can you help?

James Fitzgerald, Loughborough

A Fast File System will give you about 40k more storage space on a disk if you just use the proper parameter when formatting a disk. Instead of the usual command, type:

```
FORMAT DRIVE DF0: NAME EMPTY FFS
```

Just make sure you don't try to use the disk on a 1.3 machine, as it won't be recognised.

Ascii horror

Q When is Ascii not Ascii? When it goes from one word processor to another, that's when!

I have recently swapped from using Final Copy II to Wordworth 2 because I have need of the latter's better document processing, and the job of porting my documents from one to the other has become a nightmare.

So-called Ascii text appears with strange formatting where the paragraphs don't have line feeds, and I have to go through the whole chapter putting the carriage returns back in. Please say there is something I can do about it before I go insane.

Frustrated, Edinburgh

A *The answer is to use the Wordworth load format requester and choose Ascii, then click on the two options labelled With CR/LFs (PC Style) and As Many Paragraphs. So long as the Final Copy II document was saved using the Ascii export Wordworth should open the document perfectly, though you will then have to change the page width from 28 inches to about eight inches.*

Most packages have their own particular idea how Ascii text should be saved out, and a supposedly standard file format can have carriage returns or line feeds or blank lines almost anywhere and in any combination.

Fortunately you have a copy of the most flexible word processor in this respect and your problems should be over.

Power drain

Q I have been assured by a friend of mine that it is better for the Amiga to be left on at all times rather than being turned off and on every time it's used. Apparently, the latter not only uses more electricity but can shorten the machine's life-span. Is this true?

I mean, wouldn't you expect the environment to suffer if millions of micros were left turned on every night or all day long?

Carl Tranter, Biggin Hill

A *As far as the Amiga motherboard is concerned, it would rather be left on all the time or off all the time, because the very short period during which the circuit is powering up is the most stressful time of its life (save lightning strikes, of course – Ed).*

You'd have to ask a physicist how much electricity this uses in kilowatt/hours, but I'd be very surprised if leaving the Amiga on all night actually saved you electricity.

Many large office blocks do leave their strip lights on at night these days to avoid the necessity of switching them on and off because in this situation it is economical, but forget it for the Amiga.

A lightbulb might be able to burn for a period of time on the electricity it takes to switch one on, but I wouldn't bet on the Amiga reacting similarly.

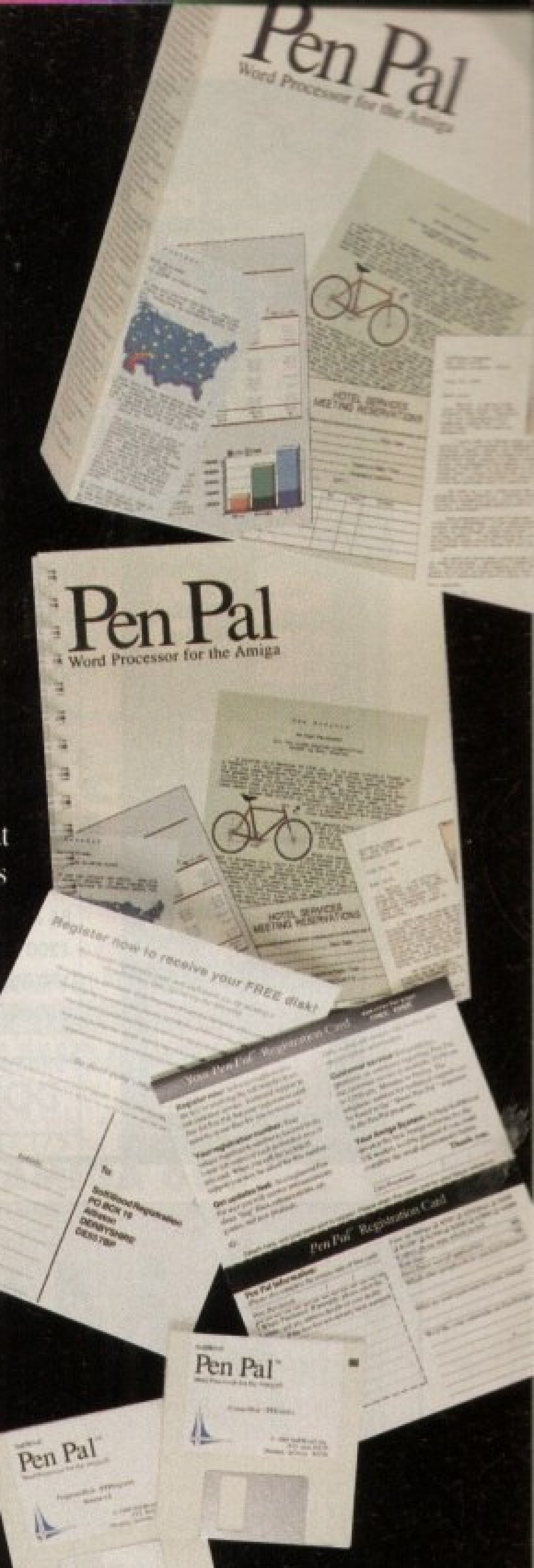


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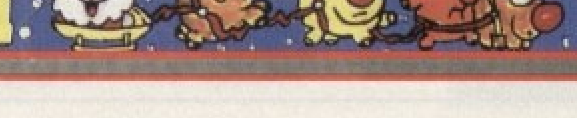
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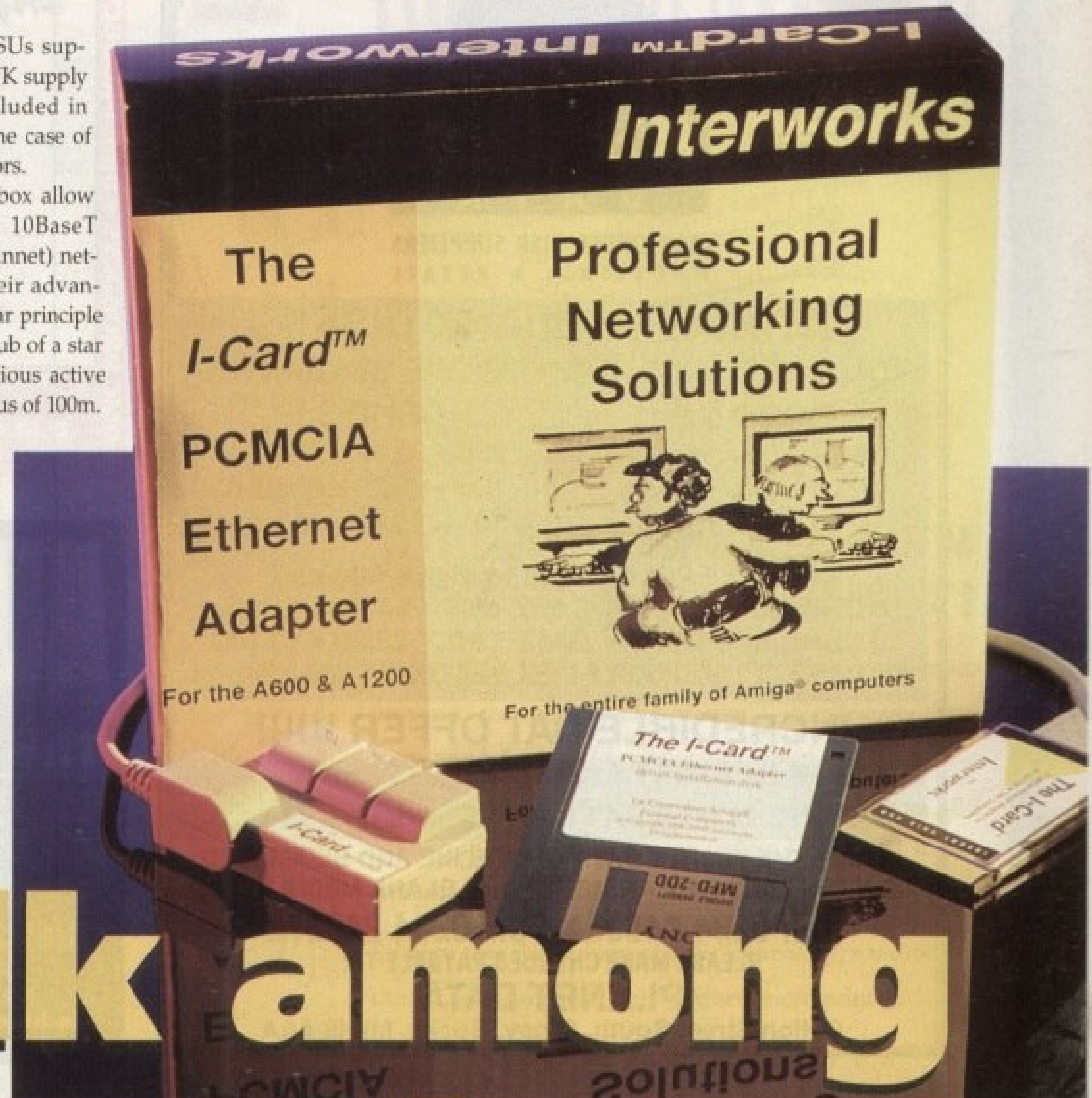
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THE HEAT IS ON



GREY-TRONIC



Talk among yourselves

Ethernet on a PCMCIA card? Stevie Kennedy casts his net over I-Card, the first A1200 LAN system.

Local area networks (LANs) have been one of the most important developments in the computer world over the last decade, yet the Amiga has been less than well served by networking peripherals and standards.

While PCs and Macs joined hands through Novel AppleTalk and others, the Amiga saw only a couple of attempts at networking, none of which caught on.

The fact that few commercial organisations have in the past used large numbers of Amigas on a single site has been a major cause of the lack of interest in LANs, but as so-called "Toaster farms" become more prevalent in the US broadcasting industry and Amigas begin to be used in numbers for other work, networking became more popular.

In general terms, most networks consist of a host machine (or server), normally a powerful beast with a huge hard drive, and a number of slave machines which communicate with each other via the host, which handles all traffic.

In so-called "peer-to-peer" networking, each machine on the network has its own host software and can communicate directly with others connected to the network.

The single aim of any network is communication, regardless of the way the network is organised, and this is most often in the form of data being passed to machines which wouldn't normally have access to it.

Small machines with small hard drives can access larger storage devices on other networked Amigas, and efficiency goes through the roof.

MODERN

Unfortunately, the intensely jargon-dominated world of networks has spawned a tower of Babel as far as standards is concerned, and it wasn't until recently that the Standard Amiga Network Architecture version II (SANA-II) was settled upon that the Amiga could boast a modern network standard.

SANA-II (which sounds too much like an old Abba song for my liking), was developed by Commodore and is a set of rules for networking software which, if adhered to, should mean all compliant packages will communicate with all others. The hoped-for result is that developers can feel free to write new software without worrying about compatibility.

I-Card consists of a PCMCIA card, a network connector, a floppy disk, and a small power supply. We had to find a British equivalent of the American PSUs supplied with our test units, but a UK supply pack should hopefully be included in future and is only needed in the case of networks using Thinnet connectors.

The inputs on the network box allow for the connection of both 10BaseT (Twisted Pair) or 10Base 2 (Thinnet) networks, both of which have their advantages. The former works on a star principle in that the host machine is the hub of a star of cabling going out to the various active machines and is limited to a radius of 100m.

Larger and more flexible networks can be built using Thinnet 10Base2 cabling which requires fewer devices and can transmit across cables of 190m in length.

A drawback is that fewer devices can be attached, but as both popular types of network are supported, the user should find I-Card compatible with most existing Ethernet systems.

Installation is a simple matter of plugging the card into the A1200 or A600 PCMCIA slot and installing the SANA-II driver. No networking software is supplied, so users will have to have access to one of the few available Amiga packages such as ENLAN-DFS or Envoy.

The TCP/IP package used mostly by high level Unix networks is also supported, so those using the A3000T for complex multimedia work can now hook the smaller Amigas into the system for use as terminals and workstations.

Only one major drawback remains with the approach taken by I-card. Using the comparatively slow 16-bit PCMCIA slot rather than a Zorro slot means that I-Card has to work hard to keep transmission speeds up to scratch. It does this well, though, and claims to reach a very respectable 300kbaud data transfer, faster than the Mac LocalTalk's 230kbaud.

Though not a peripheral which will find a huge market, the I-Card is a clean, neat solution to the problem of connecting non-Zorro equipped Amigas to the outside world, and should see a few A1200s taking their places in networks around the industry. For users of existing Ethernet systems, adding a cheap AGA Amiga is now a possibility rather than a preposterous proposal.

AC

Jargon buster

TCP/IP	Stands for Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol, an inter-network communication standard developed in the US and used mainly by Unix networks. This is the most common standard for large research and educational establishments.
Thinnet	Sometimes called "cheapernet", this type of cabling scheme uses BNC connectors with cheap cables using single layers of shielding
Thicknet	A double shielded, thicker cabling system using N-type connectors
twisted pair cable	Used in 10BaseT networks, this is a cheap form of cable, most commonly telephone cable with jack socket connectors
LAN	Local area network, a localised system working on a single site with all machines situated close to each other
server	A computer or workstation which provides services to the other machines on the network, such as optical storage devices, tape streamers, or laser printers. Servers are normally referred to by the type of service they provide, hence file servers, print servers, and mail servers.

SYSTEM ESSENTIALS

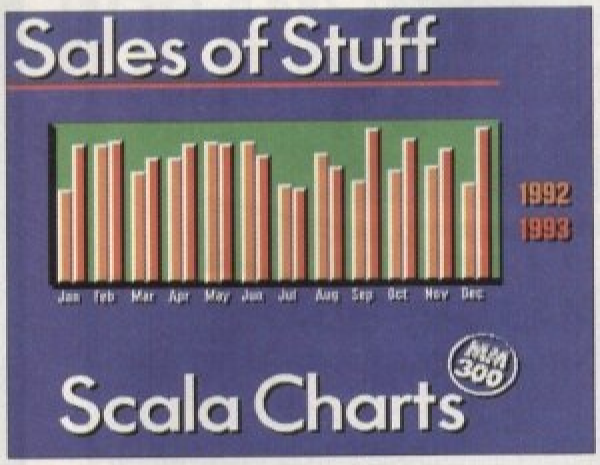
RED = Essential YELLOW = Recommended

2.0+ Workbench

Network software

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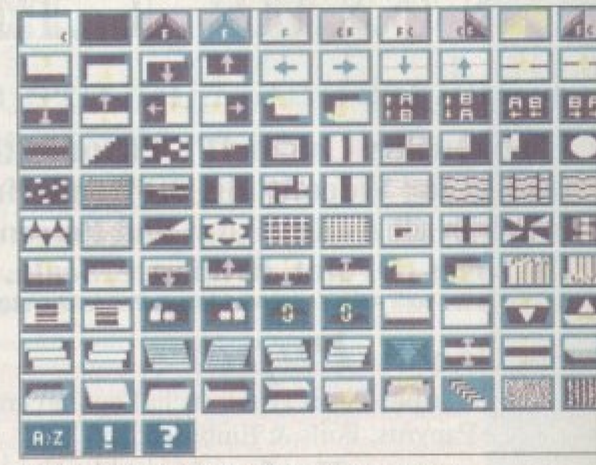
Product: I-Card Ethernet adaptor
Supplier: Ramiga International
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Price: TBA



Corporate applications are now easier than ever



The classic Scala front in action



Wipes, wipes everywhere but not a drop to drink

Scala MM300

When most people think about multimedia presentations and video titling on the Amiga, the first name that springs to mind is usually Scala. Scala has been around for a while now (since 1989 to be precise) but Scala MM300 brings the product line bang up-to-date with new features galore.

Basically it appears that Scala (I much preferred it when the company was called Digital Visions, and the product was called Scala – it was a lot less confusing!) have studied MediaPoint (see next review) and added the new features into MM300 that were lacking in MM2xx, but present in MediaPoint.

Scala MM300 comes in a swish brown folder-box containing a 300-odd page manual which is mostly a manual for MM210 with an addendum for MM300. The program itself is spread over nine disks and there's a little green thing in the box as well.

Oh, it's the dongle. A dongle is a hardware key that plugs into either mouse port on your Amiga; without it you won't be able to run Scala at all.

Time to install the software. Ah good! A company using Installer properly, that's what I like to see.

OVERSCAN

A particularly nice feature is the fact that Scala asks you with what degree of overscan you would like the backgrounds installed. You can have None (640 x 512) Standard (704 x 566) and Maximum (736 x 566). Scala Multimedia 300 (to give its full name) requires a minimum of 1Mb chip RAM, 2Mb of fast RAM, Kickstart 2 and a hard drive, but of course they recommend 2Mb of chip, 4Mb of fast, an accelerator and Kickstart 3 as a minimum for optimum performance.

The tutorials offer a gentle introduction to the world of Scala, and for the most part, a good one. However, there is still this nagging feeling that you are just doing things by rote, and when one of the scripts doesn't actually work properly (the Guess a Number script which uses variables that aren't explained in the manual) you have no way of working out how to fix what has gone wrong.

Most people who have used an Amiga for presentation, video or graphics work will have come across Scala in one of its guises, but for those who have never seen it before, here is a quick run-down.

Scala brings together pictures, brushes, fonts and text with sounds, animations, variables and buttons. It has a wide range of backdrops, fonts and ready-made clip art to get you going.

It can be used for stringing animations together to make a longer "film"; video titling and subtitling, Point of Information systems and Point of Sale systems.

It can be used as an interactive tutor, a videotext-type system, a "scoreboard" for live outside broadcast use, and many other things.

Scala has at its main menu a list of the pages you have in your script. Next to the items on the list are various attributes affecting those items like the pause length, or what transition to use between pages.

The items on the list are usually pages of graphics but can sometimes be animations, sound samples or music. If you click once on an item then click the edit button, you can edit the page, the way the animation plays or how the music fades, for example.

There are a couple of changes to the page editor in MM300. There is no longer a Move button; you just grab the thing you want to move and move it around! There is also now an Out effect



Scala vs

Ben Vost referees the ultimate clash of the Amiga Multimedia heavyweights in an exhaustive, six-page head-to-head

Can MediaPoint, the young pretender in the Amiga professional presentation scene, upstage the tried, trusted and respected Scala? Or will the recent updates Scala has seen, resulting in Scala MM300, be enough to see off the Dutch upstart? Over the next six pages, all of the major aspects of these two packages will be tried, tested and judged. After the ultimate Amiga presentation system but not sure which one to go for? Read on...

button so you can not only bring text onto the page, but also wipe it out afterwards. When using the list in the page editor you will see that there are now two columns for the effects – one in, one out.

For users of other graphics cards like Retina, OpalVision or Picasso, it would be nice to see their features incorporated into Scala. MM300 allows to supposedly open a screen in any of the display databases available screen modes, but although Picasso does provide a display database entry, any attempt to open a Picasso screen mode inside Scala is met with the dreaded Guru.

ABSOLUTE

Rather than using the normal timing in Scala whereby the pause between pages is specified, Absolute Timing gives a start point for the script of 00:00:00 and each page thereafter is worked out in relation to that start point rather than to its neighbour.

The manual mentions being able to take external sync for the timing through EX modules, but I haven't been able to test this to my satisfaction.

Previously Scala would only wipe objects onto a page, you had to remove the whole page to get rid of them. Several new wipes, including renovations of some of the older ones so that they can be applied to objects as well as pages.

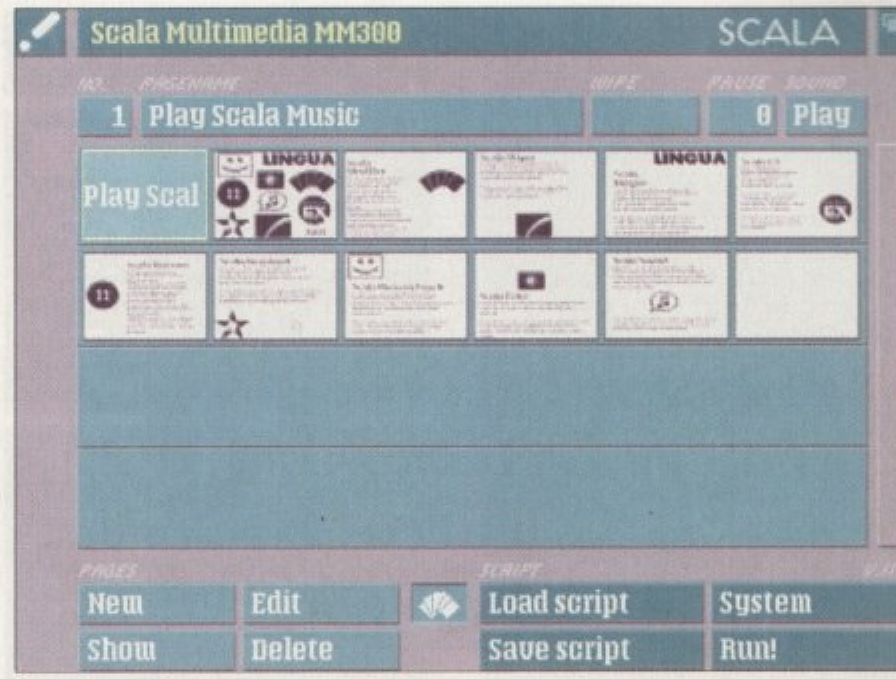
> *It has a wide range of backdrops, fonts and ready-made clip art*

You can now create lines, boxes and circles inside Scala instead of having to produce them in Deluxe Paint and import them. Now you play your samples or MODs directly from hard drive without having to worry about the amount of Chip RAM you have left. You can also attach a "mark" sound and a "select" sound to buttons for audio feedback of user choices.

Some of the EXes have been updated, and some new ones have been introduced. The Midi EX now interfaces with Blue Ribbon's One Stop Music Shop and Triple Play Plus Midi interface.

A feature called AutoMagic button creation lets you simply click on a block of text or drawn object and automatically make it into a button.

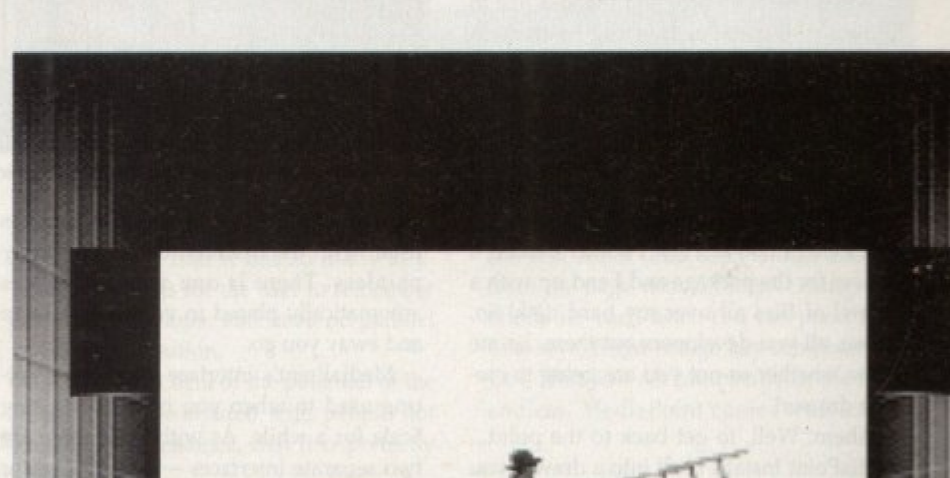
There's now a separate underline colour – about time too! – and new image processing tools abound. Scala will now allow you to view thumbnails of pictures, brushes and animations in ➤

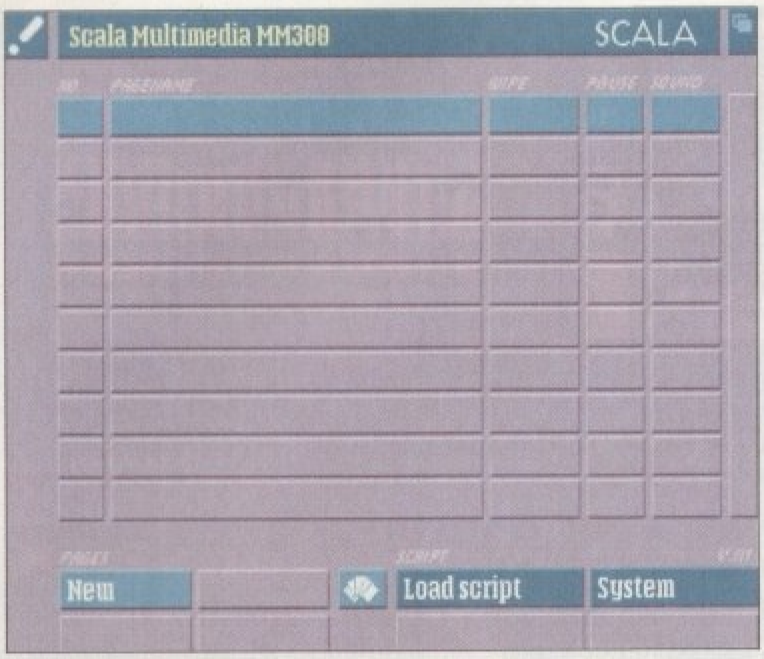


If you fancy a shuffle Scala's the software for you!

MediaPoint




Interactive animation, multimedia at it's best



First prize in the Amiga Computing boring grab award goes to...

its new shuffler file requester and allows you to have a preview of 24-bit IFFs on AGA machines.

When you bring a picture or brush into Scala now you can resize it, change or reduce the number of colours using Floyd-Steinberg dithering. Scala will also optimise a restricted palette to give the best quality to pictures with differing palettes sharing the same screen.

DITHERING

AnimLab has also been improved to take advantage of Scala's Floyd Steinberg dithering facilities. Scala's manual has always been clearly laid out, but there are bits missing.

The index isn't brilliant and, as I previously mentioned, some of the tutorial information is false. Scala have brought out a product that has been consistently innovative, and it now seems that with MM300 they have ironed out some of the annoying bugs

Ch-ch-ch-c

Scala has some of the finest transitions seen this side of a Toaster, and there are several new ones with this release. One of the features I particularly like is the ability to chain text effects together.

If you apply, say, the wallpaper transition to one line of text, it's a bit difficult to see what's going on. However, if you have several lines of text and you chain them all to one

MediaPoint

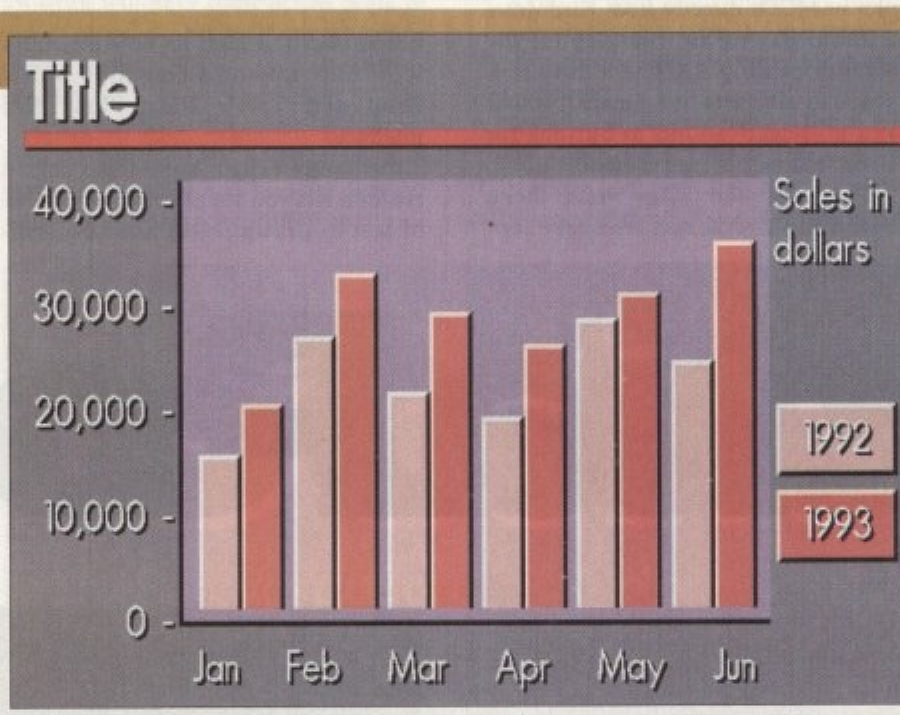
MediaPoint comes on a total of six disks, the second of which can be used as a CDTV boot disk for using the CDTV XAPP. It has a 217-page manual which states that the minimum requirement to run MediaPoint is at least 1Mb of chip RAM and 2Mb of fast RAM, Kickstart 2 and a hard drive, but they recommend a minimum of 2Mb of chip RAM and 4Mb of fast, Kickstart 3, and a 68020/30/40.

MediaPoint uses the by now familiar Installer utility from Commodore. As an aside, here's a gripe I have with all developers who use the Installer.

When I install a program I would like to know if the installer is going to create a drawer automatically, or if I have to make one. So many times now I have created a drawer for the software to be installed into, only to find out that Installer has put it into a drawer called whatever the program is inside the drawer I already made.

It's either that or I don't bother making a drawer for the package and I end up with a sprawl of files all over my hard disk! So, please, all you developers out there, let me know whether or not you are going to create a drawer!

Ahem. Well, to get back to the point... MediaPoint installs itself into a drawer you have to make (at least it tells you!), and as usual with the Installer, things are pretty painless. There is one assign which is automatically placed in your user-startup and away you go.



Mediapoint stakes its claim for the lucrative corporate sales

MediaPoint's interface takes some getting used to when you have been using Scala for a while. As with Scala there are two separate interfaces – the script editor and the page editor – but in MP there are almost two entirely different programs.

The script editor is fairly straightforward; just drag an icon from the bank on the right side of the screen over to the script and let go. A requester will pop up asking for the appropriate action.

BEVELLED

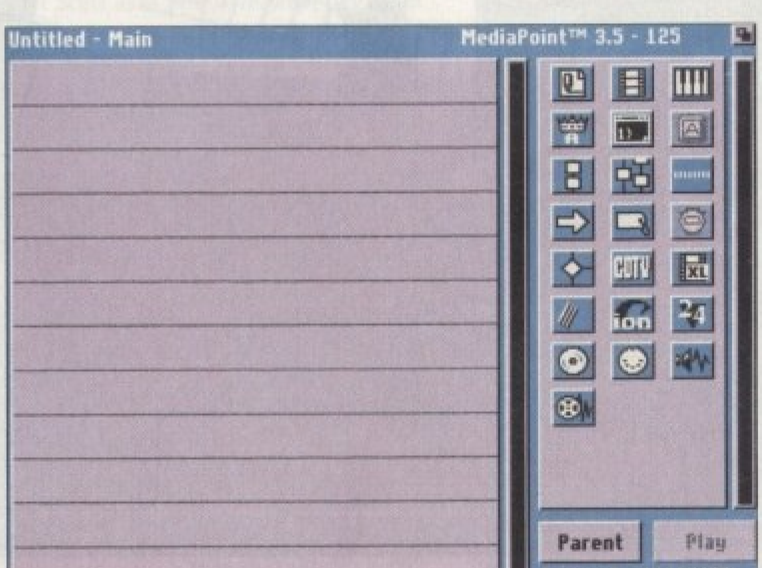
The page editor has a completely different interface. In it you create boxes into which you can type text, import a picture, both or neither. You can't do anything without making a box first. Because everything is based around this box format, it means that you can have a bevelled box with a picture in it (scaled to fit, or cropped, as you wish), with text on top of that.

And what's more, the whole thing is one object and can be moved around as such. The page editor has a menu that lists all the currently active programs on your system so you can create a box in the page editor, switch to DPaint and knock something wonderful up, in a matter of minutes.

Then you switch back to the page editor and grab the DPaint screen into the box you have created. MediaPoint is certainly very fast at remapping and scaling bitmaps so they fit in with your plans.

The page editor is also supposed to support other file formats dependent on Datatypes, but I couldn't bring anything in through that method. The program-





MediaPoint can only manage secomd in the boring grab competition, but if it wasn't for the collection of xapps it could of taken the title

that plagued the early versions of Scala Multimedia.

I believe that there needs to be some sort of solution as far as the dongle goes. Perhaps a different version of the dongle for the Runtime Player (or preferably none at all).

It seems a little silly that you can't show off any of your creations to anyone except on your own machine.

ch-changes

line with the wallpaper effect, Scala assumes that those lines are all one big object and applies the effect across them all as a single unit rather than individually.

As previously stated, you can now wipe text off a page as well as on to it, which opens up a whole new field of one-page scripts. Why bother to keep jumping backwards and forwards between pages if you can put all the text you like onto one page and bring it on and take it off when you want?

Of the new transitions, the one I like best is the Fade to White, which does just that; it fades the current screen to white then fades back to the next screen.

Very impressive. The one I like least is Ants. It's far too slow, as is dissolve.

SYSTEM ESSENTIALS

RED = Essential YELLOW = Recommended

1 Mb Chip RAM | 2 Mb Fast RAM | Hard drive

2.0 Kickstart | 2 Mb Chip RAM | 4 Mb Fast RAM

Accelerator | 3.0 Kickstart

The bottom line

Product: Scala Multimedia MM300
Supplier: Scala UK, Mill Studio, Crane Mead, Ware SG12 9PY
Tel: 0920 444294
Price £329 including VAT

Ease of use 8

You can get right in there and immediately start creating presentations. Manual? What's that?

Implementation 9

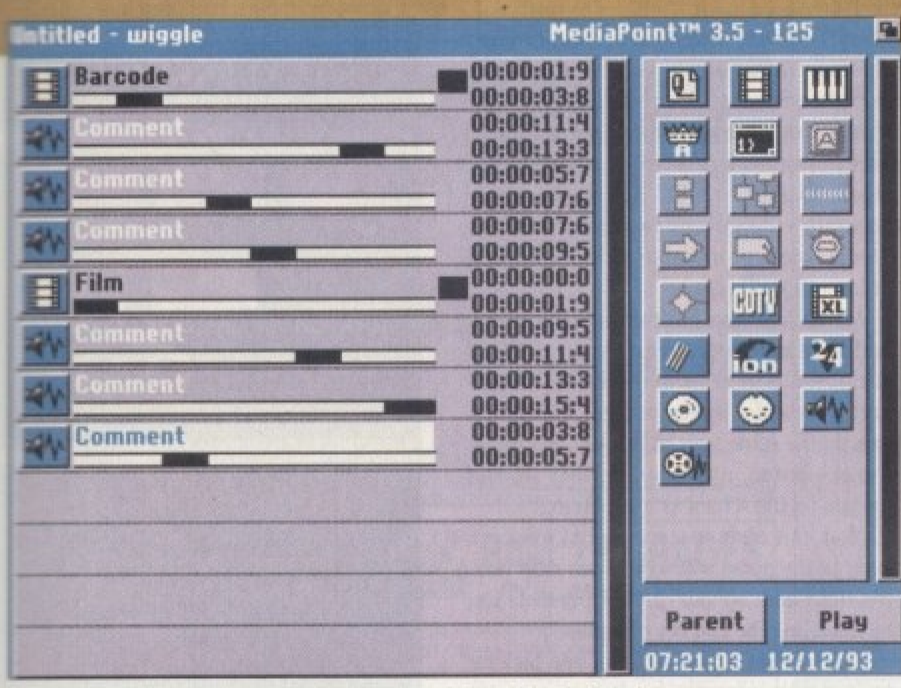
Logical interface, great output

Value for money 8

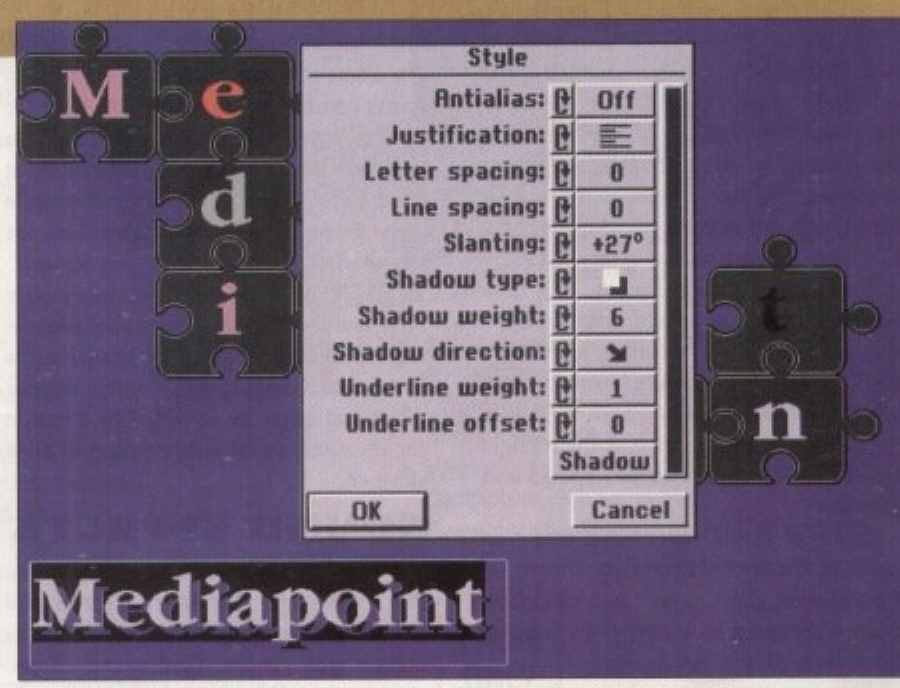
With the price drop, Scala becomes even better value

Overall 9

Getting better all the time, Scala is a good reason to buy an Amiga



SMPTE timecode with a huge array of plug-in modules waiting in the wings



Anti-aliasing, justification, drop shadow and all the text options you could want

would read the file I had selected ponder for a long time, then put garbage on the screen and ask me if I wanted it.

Unfortunately, seeing as the only option I could select that worked was Cancel, I couldn't get the image into the page editor even if I had wanted to.

The whole thing bears an analogy to Amiga DTP packages. Where ProPage and MediaPoint both require you to put boxes on the screen for everything, PageStream and Scala both allow you to plonk your cursor down where you like and start typing.

With MediaPoint you have to add a page to the script after it has been made. You can pull over a Page icon, select Cancel when it asks you for a file, the click on the icon you have dragged and edit the page, saving it out afterwards, but then you still need to reopen the file requester and choose the file you have just edited!

This means that your hard drive is going to get very full of pages and pages of MediaPoint stuff very quickly. Another gripe about this method of operation is that there is no way of previewing what

> *You can create a diffrent look by making the wipe really chunky or fine*

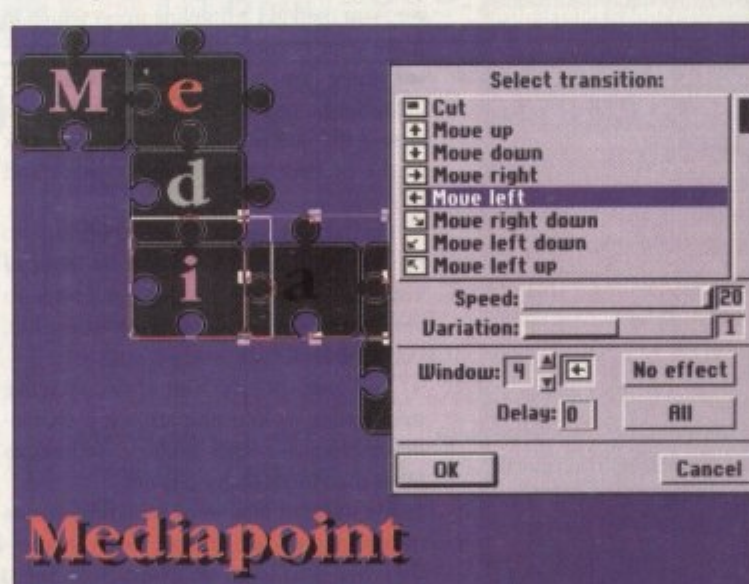
your page will look like except by coming out of the page editor, making sure that the page you want is loaded, then showing the page.

This is OK if you only have to prepare one or two pages, but what about once you have 50 or so? Also, while you are editing your pages the screen is properly centred, but when it comes to playback time, the whole lot is off-centre.

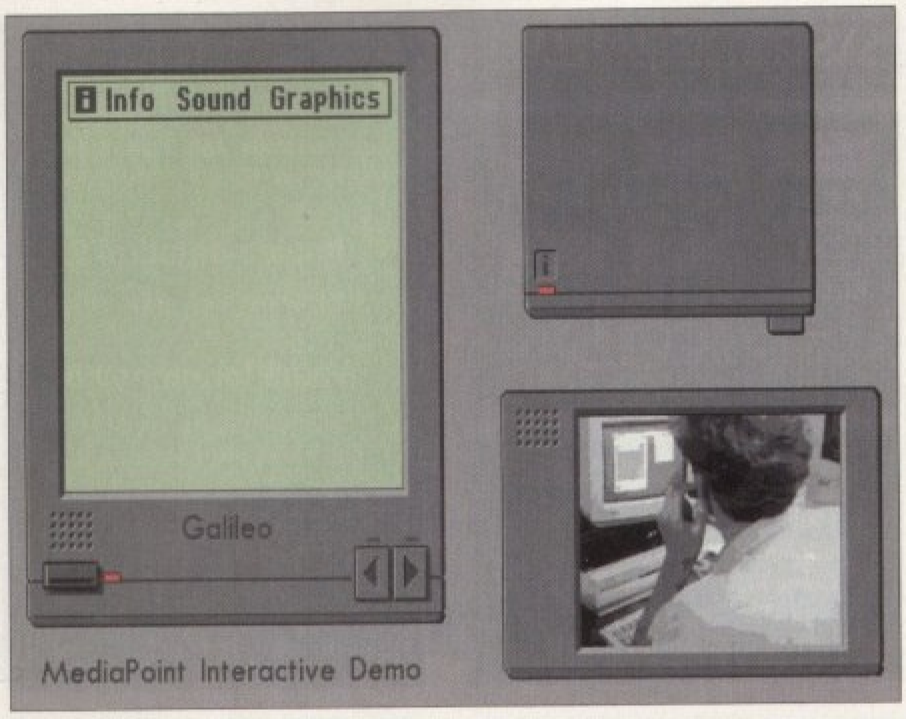
I realise that this is for accurate placement of the graphics onto video, but what is the point of having the rest of the interface at normal offset if you have to fiddle with your screen controls every time you want to view what you have created? I feel another potential problem with MediaPoint is that it has so many keyboard short-cuts for the user to remember that aren't obvious and have no parallel menu item or button,

Thus a great deal of the potential of the product will be wasted with people not knowing, for instance, that it is perfectly possible to bring a window, picture and the text for it (one object) into and out from the page with different timings and effects for each item. You can press function keys, Right-Amiga-key combinations, Ctrl, Shift and Alt combinations; the list is endless. MediaPoint comes with a very

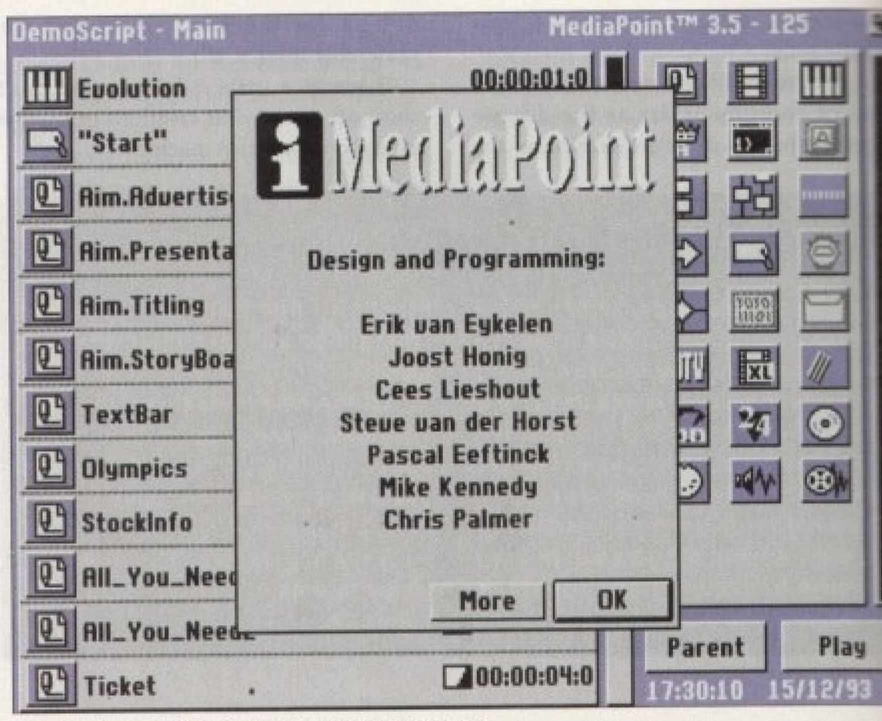
➤



Graphic transitions at the touch of a button



A point of sale information system in the making



Yet another look at the familiar MediaPoint front end

nice selection of wipes, fades and dissolves. There are some that are much better quality than their equivalents in Scala. However, there are also quite a few that are almost useless, even at the fastest speed, unless you really want a transition that takes nearly a second to complete.

You can apply about half the total transitions to objects in a page, with the obvious absence of a random transition because your pages are pre-saved. Each effect also has variations on a theme, so for a straightforward wipe in there might be two variations: normal speed and ease-in.

The size of the blocks that make up some of the effects is usually altered by the variation slider so that you can create quite a different look simply by making the wipe really chunky or fine.

There are a couple of additional transitions that are specifically for POI systems, one a sort of wiggle. Imagine you have an arrow pointing to the button you want the user to push, wouldn't it be nice if you could get the arrow to point repeatedly at your button? Well, that's what wiggle does. There's also a blink transitions for the same sort of attention getting device.

MediaPoint comes with some pretty nifty features; Serial and parallel branching are two of them. Serial branching is just a case of having a subroutine in your script that might be activated by a button for instance, parallel branching is a lot cleverer.

SOUND EFFECTS

Basically a parallel branch is just like putting another page into your script only it's not just one page, it could be an animation with synchronised sound effects, or an entire slide show, but at the main script level it just looks like one command.

In a serial branch the order of the events is important because they are executed one after the other from the top down. However, with parallel branching the order of the events isn't important but their timing is.

When you open a parallel branch you have to say how long you want it opened for. You then get a timeline upon which to place your events. This is the only important thing. You could have your events in alphabetical order, but the one that comes first is the one first on the timeline. Look at the picture; it's easier to understand that way.

MediaPoint has an excellent attitude to type. If you want to change one letter of your line from white 12-point Times to shocking pink 114-point Letter Gothic, you can!

You can specify font style, spacing underlining, colour and size on a character-by-character basis with no limitations other than those of good taste!

MediaPoint is able to schedule events over a long period of time. You can specify when you want an event to happen; every Thursday afternoon at four, or three times an hour every day at midnight, except on Sundays – for instance.

You can set timing from your Amiga or an external source such as a Midi timeclock, SMPTE or EBU timing for frame accurate video overlays with one of the MediaPoint-controllable video recorders or laser disc players.

MediaPoint can put things like the time and date into your script if you wish, in various different formats. To all intents and purposes, these just get treated in exactly the same way as normal text while the presentation is playing, they do not update on the screen as it is playing!

You can also specify global hotkeys even to the point where you can stop people from quitting out of your presentation by disabling the Esc key completely.

MediaPoint's manual is a little lacking in in-depth information. It seems pretty thorough when you are reading it, but when it comes to referencing something you are having trouble with, if you can find it in the index, there just isn't enough explanation.

UP TO SCRATCH?

I was really looking forward to reviewing MediaPoint. I have been waiting for its release since November last year, when I saw it for the first time at the World of Commodore in Cologne.

I went again this year and got myself a copy to review, but I have to say it's not up to scratch. I don't know what was wrong with the product that delayed it for so long (as there is no noticeable difference between the version I am reviewing and the version I saw last year, other than the name change), but it's let Scala catch up with it, and even overtake it.

But if Activa get some of the problems sorted out (ie the data types not working properly, the lack of a previewer in the page editor, the slowness of some of the transitions, etc), I think they've got a winner on their hands.

Tetchy tutorials

The various tutorials that come with MediaPoint show you how to create scripts with serial and parallel branching (more on these later), how to make buttons and bind them to keyboard short-cuts and how to record the timing of your pages to match sounds to an animation, or slides to a soundtrack.

Unfortunately, the very first tutorial leaves you with a sense of "so what?". There are errors in it and it gives you nothing to play with. The ones that follow on are a little better, but throughout there is no sense of learning, just one of following instructions.

That having been said, a nice touch is the inclusion of finished versions of the tutorial scripts so that you can check your efforts against them.

SYSTEM ESSENTIALS

RED = Essential YELLOW = Recommended

1 Mb Chip RAM · 2 Mb Fast RAM · Hard drive · 2.0 Kickstart · 2 Mb Chip RAM · 4 Mb Fast RAM · Accelerator · 3.0 Kickstart

The bottom line

Product: MediaPoint 3
Supplier: Activa UK
Tel: 081-402 5770
Price £300

Ease of use 7

Fairly simple to get to grips with, the Amiga idiom of dragging icons around is easy to understand.

Implementation 8

Good interface, the manual doesn't stand up so well to scrutiny, but the finished presentations are superb.

Value for Money 8

A professional product at a professional price.

Overall 8

A good start for this new package, if it gets updated as regularly as Scala, we should see a fierce battle between the two for world domination of the multimedia market.

Which package is best for you?

Over in the blue corner we have the defending world heavyweight champion Scala Multimedia 300. In the red corner we have the contender; he showed up momentarily at the end of last year, but now he's here to seriously challenge the current holder of the *AC* Best Multimedia Package – we present MediaPoint 3.

The first part of this bout will resolve which of the packages has the best support from the sidelines with clip art, fonts and backdrops being a major consideration.

Well, MM300 gets a good one in early on with the fact that Scala now has nine new backgrounds bringing the total up to a massive 79, along with a wide selection of single colour pictograms.

MediaPoint has a very small number of included backdrops but scores highly with its maps, colour clip art of various computer-oriented items and single colour ISO 7001-compliant pictograms.

Scala gives you a printout of its backdrops (unfortunately without the nine new ones) whereas MediaPoint has no documentation for its backdrops. Neither package has printouts of the clip art included. Scala gets a blow in late in the first round with its 17-strong collection of fonts in different sizes (with print outs for reference) compared to MediaPoint's nine fonts (without print outs).

APPLICATIONS

Expandability-wise, MediaPoint immediately jumps to the fore with a menu that is designed for the user to add his favourite applications to, much like ToolManager for Workbench.

Any time you wish to run an external program you simply choose its name from the menu. Scala has the ability to add in outside applications too, but they must be placed in a specific drawer in the Scala directory and they have to have tooltypes set up to use them.

MediaPoint's ability to grab screens from other applications and bring them in, thus obviating the need for intermediate file storage, is a plus; just draw what you want in Personal Paint then grab the screen into the program.

No need to save your picture, then load it in again. MediaPoint say that their package has expandable transitions – just drop new ones into the system drawer of your MediaPoint installaton. Scala's are hard coded. Both packages support add-on modules in the shape of EXs for Scala and XAPPs for MediaPoint. As you can see from the box-out, both have an extensive collection of add-ons with Scala coming out tops for genlock support, but MediaPoint supporting a wider range of Laserdisc players and VCRs.

Scala also has an EX called "Link" which is to allow certain other applications like Bars&Pipes Professional to control a Scala presentation.

I tried to use the External tool for CDTV in Scala (EX) and in MediaPoint (XAPP). Unfortunately, neither of the packages give very much space to the topic – they simply tell you "there is a button here for the start of the section" and no more! Both systems have an easy way to just connect a CDTV to your machine via a null modem cable.

Attaching a floppy drive to the CDTV and booting one of the distribution disks (disk 1 for Scala, disk 2 for MediaPoint) will ready the CDTV for EX/XAPP use. Both systems displayed problems if you played several segments from the CD at length, then exited back to the main screen.

> *Competition should ensure a healthy drive towards new features*

All in all, I think that the quality of the documentation for this topic left a little to be desired, and I only hope that the other modules are better catered for in this area.

Scala also makes mention of a program called Scala Echo, which, it appears, is to be run as an EX to allow you to perform assemble edits *à la* Video Director.

As far as fades and wipes go, MediaPoint weighs in with 83 page effects, most of which have at least three or four variations, but only 42 text effects with variations.

Scala has 103 page effects and a staggering 86 text effects, a lot of those new to MM300. Both of them do your standard wipes effectively, with MediaPoint possibly just having the edge over Scala in terms of smoothness.

In the more exotic wipes like the T2 or "Rows Odd/Even Bottom" they are evenly matched. MediaPoint loses out with its "you have to save the page first" approach in that you can't have random text effects.

Scala's colour fading works better than MediaPoint's too. With Scala, the transition almost appears to be a natural progression of colours, whereas with MediaPoint the colour changes seem to be harsher. I think this has a lot to do with the way backgrounds are set up in Scala to share the last eight colours of their palette.

CONCLUSION

Without a doubt, this bout could continue on into the night with both fighters scrabbling for that extra advantage that would see his opponent on the mat.

In response to MediaPoint's low price Scala's has been dropped to £329. In the final analysis it will matter little as both have unique features to offer. Scala seems the better package, at the moment, but it is a seasoned piece of software, while the newcomer has all the exuberance of the young, striking out into new areas, and new ways of behaving.

MediaPoint certainly has some maturing to do, but, and I know this is going to sound like a cop out, both packages complement each other in the features they offer.

This will make it very difficult to just buy one of the packages, prospective buyers should certainly not just jump at one or the another but look at them side-by-side, as I have, over a period of time, to see which ones features best suit their needs.

In conclusion, I have to say I am glad that there is, at last, some serious competition for the title of "Best Multimedia Package", the inherent competition between the two packages should ensure a healthy drive towards adding new features and external applications; how about a PhotoCD XAPP/EX?

What about support for other font formats and the SSA animation format? What about support for other graphics cards and control for the add-in modules for Opalvision (when they finally come out!)? Come on Scala and MediaPoint, give us your best shot.

AC

Add-on modules comparison

	MPoint	Scala
CDTV	yes	yes
CDXL	yes	no
Interlude	yes	no
Canon Ion	yes	yes
GVP IV-24	yes	yes
GVP G-Lock	no	yes
SuperGen	no	yes
G2 Genlock	no	yes
Genlockπ	no	yes
Midi	yes	yes
Studio 16	yes	no
AVideo	no	yes
VideoDisc/VCR	yes	yes
Sony LDP-1200	yes	yes
LDP-1500	yes	yes
LDP-1500P	yes	yes
LDP-1550	yes	yes
LDP-1550P	yes	yes
LDP-1600P	yes	yes
LDP-3300P	yes	yes
LDP-3600D	yes	yes
Sony 2000	yes	no
Sony Umatic 9	yes	no
Pioneer 2200	yes	no
LD-V4100	yes	yes
LD-V4200	yes	yes
LD-V4300	yes	yes
6000	yes	no
6010	yes	no
LV-V8000	yes	yes
Philips VP series	yes	yes
Philips 405	yes	no
Philips 410	yes	no
* Philips 835	yes	no
NEC PC VCR	yes	no

* *unless they are part of the VP series*

Trading places

Just as a test, I decided I would take a demo script from each and try to do them in the other. I took the Sales Chart from MediaPoint and tried to build the same presentation in Scala. I also took the LoScalatore script from Scala and tried to recreate it in MediaPoint.

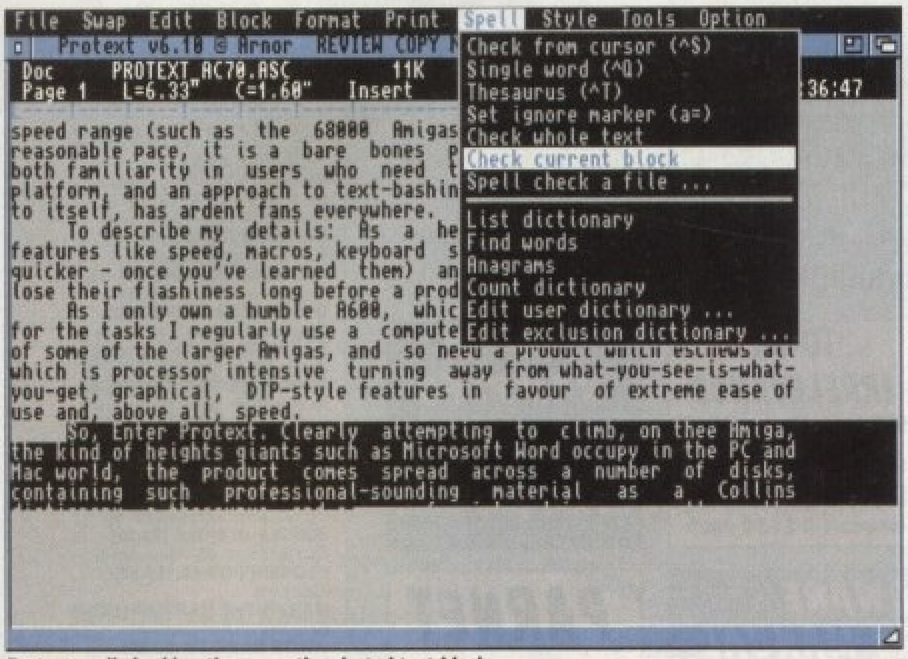
The Scala version of the sales chart is definitely not as polished as the MediaPoint one. MediaPoint has the ability to only partially bevel a box so that you can have a flat bottom edge to the chart, it also has an "extrude" kind of wipe that Scala doesn't.

I tried the move wipes in Scala, but of course they wipe from the edge of the page, not from a predefined place.

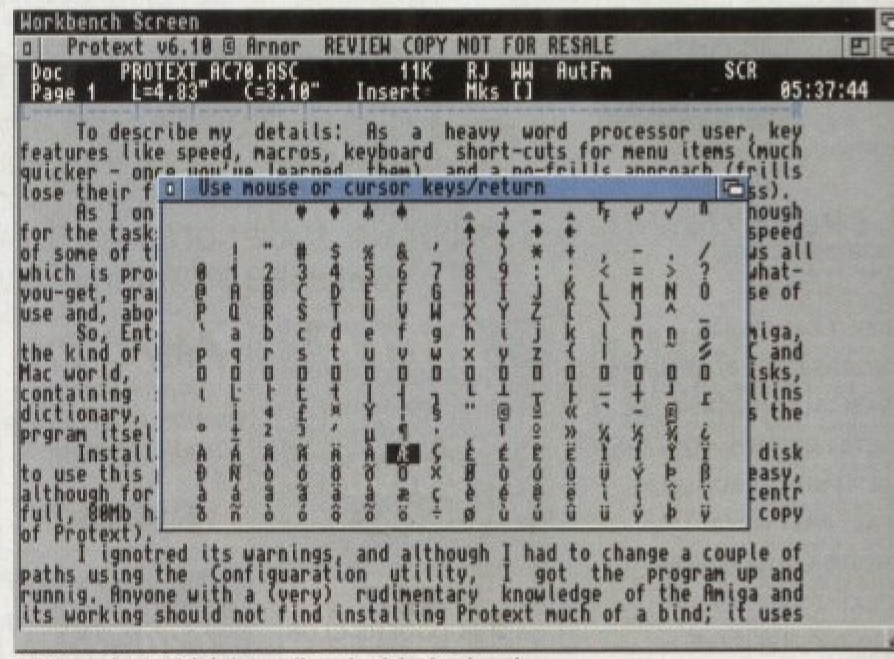
The MediaPoint version of the LoScalatore script also ran into problems. This script plays several anims seamlessly end-to-end showing a film of a man put a ladder up against thin air, climbing it and disappearing at the top.

MediaPoint could do the animation part without problems, but came unstuck on the accompanying music and sound FX.

The tune was completely distorted and I couldn't work out how to get the applause to coincide with the "end of the film" part of the animation.



Protext spell-checking the currently selected text block



A Roman character is being easily and painlessly selected

Six of

Protext has constantly excelled in all of its releases, but with version six at least some of the complaints of the occasional graphics user have been answered. Phil Morse installed the disks and took a look

The normal method of reviewing a product is, it must be confirmed, the tried-and-tested routine of first checking out the software/hardware or whatever, struggling with its idiosyncrasies and hidden delights (usually all before reading the instruction manual) and then taking a pile of notes to the nearest available word processor.

In this case, however, the nearest word processor just happens to be the exact product under review, due not in any small part to the fact that I pounced upon the product before it even left our mail bag and staked my claim on the review!

POWERFUL

Protext is, you see, a rather special type of word processor. Available across a number of platforms as well as the Amiga (it even features as the built-in word processor for the Amstrad Notepad range reviewed previously in this magazine), it is an extremely powerful program, but one which cannot offer too many machine-specific (read: flashy) features.

As the platforms at the lower end of the CPU speed range (such as the 68000 Amigas) need to run Protext at a reasonable pace, it is a bare-bones product, and one which, through both familiarity in users who need to use it on more than one platform, and through an approach to text-bashing which is pretty much unique to itself, has ardent fans everywhere. To elaborate upon my personal position: As a heavy word processor user, key features like speed, macros, keyboard short-cuts for menu items (much quicker – once you've learned them) and a no-frills approach (frills lose their flashiness long before a product outgrows its usefulness) are important to me.

As I only own a humble A600, which is more than powerful enough for the tasks I regularly use a computer for, I don't have the speed of some of the larger Amigas, and so need a product which eschews all which is processor-intensive; a product which turns away from what-you-see-is-what-you-get, graphical, DTP-style features in favour of extreme ease of use and, above all, speed.

So, enter Protext. Clearly attempting to climb, on the Amiga, the kind of heights giants such as Microsoft Word occupy in the PC and Mac worlds, the product comes spread across a number of disks, containing such professional-sounding material as a Collins dictionary, a thesaurus, and a mass of printer drivers as well as the program itself.

Installation to hard disk (and you really must have a hard disk to use this program – it needs 3Mb of empty space, too) is easy, although for some reason the program assured me that my 40 per cent full, 80Mb hard drive did not have enough room to accommodate my copy of Protext).

I ignored its warnings, and although I had to change a couple of paths using the Configuration utility, I got the program up and running. Anyone with a (very) rudimentary knowledge of the Amiga and its working should not find installing Protext much of a bind; it uses the Commodore installer, which thankfully is now becoming a bit of a standard for serious Amiga software.

As you can see from the visually uninspiring screenshots, the program is nothing much to look at. The text window, calibrated by nothing flashier than Ascii dashes and exclamation marks, operates within a Workbench window. Highly functional but not flashy – the trademark of most of Protext's features.

Ten menus lurk across the top bar, covering every conceivable function you could wish to inflict upon a piece of text. Notice I say text – Protext's picture han-

I can see clearly now

Protext has traditionally been known to pander to graphics by a seriously tiny amount, resulting in its image as the ultimate *text* cruncher – and little else.

That said, the program now supports IFF, PCX, GIF and GEM IMG graphics files, and can print them at any point in a document (in black-and-white). It does not display the graphics on-screen at any time, instead inserting a marker to warn you of the presence of a picture.

Although highly primitive compared to the likes of some of the near-DTP so-called "word" processors, this is to facilitate speed in the program's primary role as a text cruncher – any anyway, the program does now at least permit the addition of, say, a graphical masthead or piece of clip art on a news-sheet or company letter.

Images can be centred, scaled, turned into negatives, and generally shifted around enough to not render this feature totally useless.

Improved manuals

Thankfully the manuals have been reprinted for the new version – it's not good to find a list of changes in addition to a set of manuals for a previous version, as is the case with a lot of upgraded software.

As it is, the manuals are neat, informative and thorough. There are two: The first, entitled the User Manual, is 180 pages long and contains a broad introduction to word processing and Protext; a concise (but at times vague) Getting Started section, an overview, a guided tour, detailed instruction, hints and tips and a thorough index.

The second, 160-page manual is for reference, and contains the really detailed information on how to use Protext's most powerful functions, such as the macros and mail merge features.

It contains character set tables as well as useful advanced user information, like compatibility details across the various platforms it has and does appear on.

It would have been better if the manuals were ring-bound; however, they're perfect bound (like a book) making it more of a task to prop the manual open on a page while you attempt to do what it is suggesting.

A small niggle, though. And anyway, you probably won't find yourself looking too much in the manuals, for the on-screen Help is excellent.

When it comes to text formatting, how about the ability to format paragraphs separately or the document as a whole, or features allowing the insertion of soft hyphens and footnotes, or start-of-paragraph formatting (regardless of any Tabs you might have set)? All are under Format.

Printing has always been one of Protext's great strengths, and this version keeps up the reputation, with a diskful of drivers, and advanced features such as the ability to print what's on-screen or from a file on disk, to interrupt printing – or to turn Protext into a by-line or by-character typewriter. Someone must have a use for this function!

Using a large Collins on-disk dictionary, the spell checker can check a single word, check from the cursor, or simply do the whole document. There's an integrated thesaurus – even an editable user dictionary and the much else, number-crunching routines, file spoolers and line-number handling, as well as the word count, which is telling me I'm running out of space to cram all of these words in!

Suffice to say that with a full and definable range of viewing options, a powerful (but easy to use) macro generator which allows one-key programming of sets of instructions you frequently carry out, and even a line drawing option, there is about as much flexibility as you can hope for built in to this program.

CONCLUSION

So in conclusion, I can report little to moan about – if this sounds like what you're looking for. For the heavy user, who's prepared to negotiate the learning curve to get all of the keyboard short-cuts sussed, there's an immense increase in word processing efficiency to be discovered.

By forfeiting time-hogging frills and nice screen displays, Protext can offer not only compatibility over a number of platforms, but tried and tested speed and reliability too. If you're serious about words, this is the serious word processor for you. AC

the best

...ding abilities are rudimentary to say the least, and that's a far sight better than those offered in v5.5, which says something about who this program is aimed at!

As well as containing the Quit and Help functions, the File mode concerns itself with loading, saving and handling current and saved text files. As well as the advanced abilities to catalogue files in a folder or a disk, there are Save As (various types of Ascii) and File Merge options, as well as a simple document renaming routine.

The second menu, Swap, allows you to work on two documents at once; one in the top and one in the bottom of the screen. You can type up notes into a finished piece by having the notes scrolling in the top window and the developing write-up in the bottom window, for instance.

The Edit menu handles strange characters (all kinds of accents and foreign ones are easily accessible), offers powerful text-search features (you can even search backwards), as well as page-jumping and time and date insertion commands. Meanwhile its neighbour on the right-hand side, the Block menu, allows cutting, copying, moving, pasting, deleting, saving, loading and formatting of any chosen block of text, markable by keyboard or mouse.

ability to sort out anagrams. Great for crosswords!

The Style menu, although only a couple of obscure-looking options to look at, hints at the real power of the program. Here you can define "styles"; you could have a style for business letters, one for memos, one for (as a journalist) articles, and switch between them. All you do is tell the computer the style you want, and it remembers how you like to have, say, a business letter. Neat.

The Tools and Options menus contain a rag-bag of configurational and miscellaneous feature – which is not to distract from their value. They contain, among

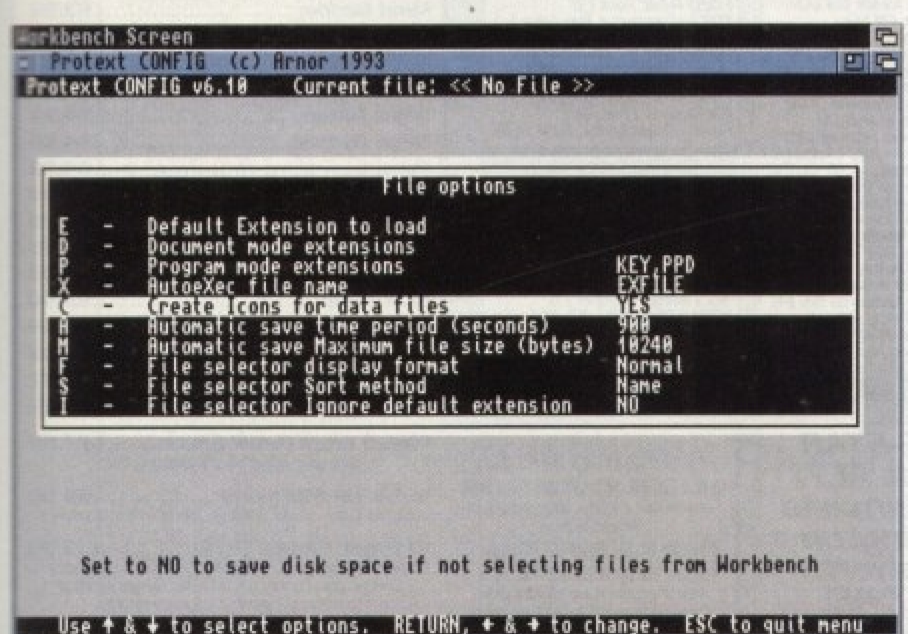
SYSTEM ESSENTIALS
RED = Essential YELLOW = Recommended

1 Mb RAM | Hard drive | 2.1 WorkBench

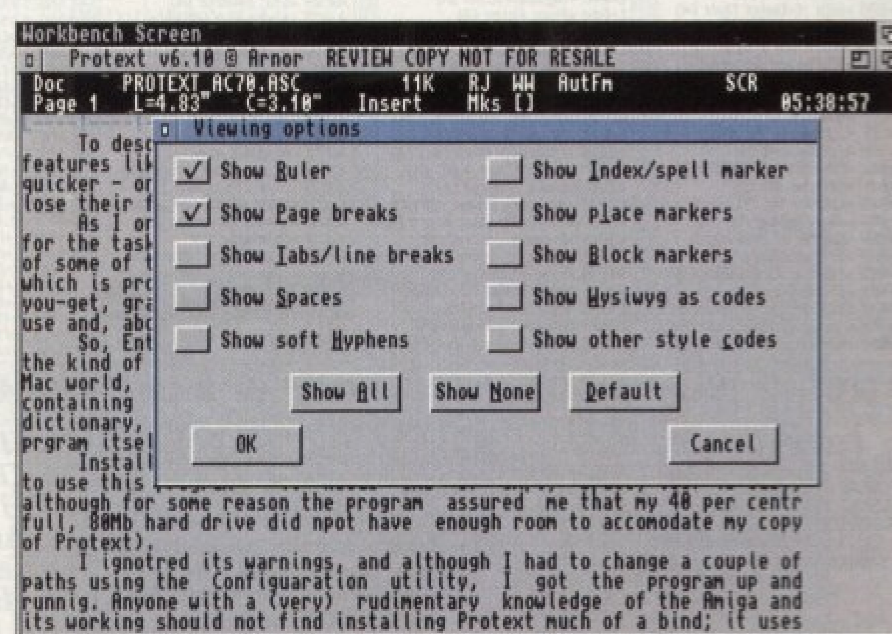
The bottom line

Product: Protext
Price: £99
Supplier: Arnor Ltd
Address: 611 Lincoln Road, Peterborough PE1 3HA
Phone: 0733 68909
Fax: 0733 67299

Ease of use 9
Implementation 8
Value for money 8
Overall 9



This is one of the many nested menus in the comprehensive Configuration utility



Here one of the display mode parameters is being altered

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6084 +Yelp (A)
6085 +Rogue Troper
6088 +Tricky Turn (A)
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6092 The Simsons (A)
6094 +Return to Earth (A)
6096 +Popeye (A)
6097 +Plotting (A)
6102 +Pipelines (A)
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6109 +Bug Blaster (A)
6110 +Mysterious World
6112 +Cubulus (A)
6127 +Defenda (A)
6138 +Peter Quest (A)
6153 +Sealance (A)
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6175 +Revenge Camel (A)
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UTILITIES

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U584 +New Super Killer (A)

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A013 +Space-Probe (A)
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A218 +More Areotoon (A)
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A221 +James Whales Anim
A225 +5 Way Kill Mole 2 (A)
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STAR TREK anim

Agatron Vol 1-38

DEMOS

D001 +Space Ace (A)
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D029 +Budbrain Mega (2)
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D035 +Thames TV Demo (A)
D050 Pink Floyd (6) (A)
D062 +Predators (2) (A)
D068 +Sam Fox Bibs Bobs
D076 +Contact Been Made (A)
D078 +System Violation (A)
D120 +1911 Voyage
D152 +The Electric Touch
D154 +Virtual Real (2)
D156 +Kylies Demo (2)
D163 +Harlequin Demo (A)
D168 +Silence of the Lamb (A)
D180 +Cheap Movies Clip
D188 +Peace of Mind
D190 +Software Failure
D201 +Farts Demo (A)
D203 +Hidden Demo (A)
D205 +CDA Limlight (A)
D218 +Scream (2)
D225 +Deluxe Video III (2)
D234 Silence Expose (2)
D236 +Deluxe Photo Lab (2)
D240 +Anarchy

18+ DEMOS

D001 +Showering Girl 5 (A)
D003 +Bodytalk (2) (A)
D006 +Viz Calendar 1990 (A)
D007 +NIGHTBREED (A)
D009 +Maria Whittaker (A)
D024 +Sabrina Special (A)
D025 +Die Filkinger (A)
D026 +Madonna Early Days
D028 Kathy Lloyd*
D030 +Mega Maid* (A)
D031 +Calendar Girls (A)
D032 +Mayfair (A)
D033 +Utopia (4)
D045 +Girls of Sport (A)
D049 +Page 3 Girl (A)
D070 +Gon Gon Girls (A)
D071 +Tina Small (A)

MUSIC

M001 +Beasty Boys (A)
M002 +Michael Jackson (A)
M003 +Do The Bartman (A)
M005 +100 C64 Tunes
M018 +The Xmas Song (2) (A)
M020 +Laurel & Hardy (2) (A)
M025 +Money for Nothing (A)
M026 +Walk This Way Remix (A)
M029 +Safe Sex Demo (A)
M031 +Betty Boo (2) (A)
M035 +Arse-Wipe (A)
M040 +Secret PMs Ball (2)(A)
M058 +Sgt Pepper Disk (2)(A)
M062 +The Rainbow Demo (A)
M063 +Chubby Brown (A)
M072 +Madonna (A)
M076 +Popeye (A)
M084 +C64 Games Music (A)
M093 +Miller Lite (A)
M107 +Flash Gordon (2) (A)
M115 +Mahoney & Kaktus 2 (A)
M122 +The Yello Mix (A)
M123 +Home & Away+Bread (A)
M125 +Adams Family (A)
M131 +Amiga Chart III (A)
M135 +Kejriens Megamix (A)
M147 +Bangle (A)
M150 +Tiffany (A)
M153 +Xmas Music Col (A)
M154 +Kylies (2) (A)
M156 +CD Player (A)
M158 +Doctoring Tardis (A)
M160 +I am too Sexy (2) (A)
M166 +Ooh It Obscene 2 (A)
M167 +Ooh It Obscene 3 (A)
M168 +Rocks 'n' Roll (A)
M171 +Madonna (Virgin) (A)
M177 +Pet Shop Boy 4 Tune (A)
M184 +Samfox (Please Me)(A)
M186 +Madonna (Rescue) (A)
M188 +Joe Le Taxi (A)
M194 +Jesus One's (2) (A)
M230 +Now Music (1-15)
M262 +A to Z C64 Tunes (4) (A)
M274 +LSD Techno Warrior (A)
M276 +Vivaldi 4 Season
M293 +Bach Concerto 5/6 (A)
M314 +Dick Tracy (2) (A)
M317 +Freddy Rapp (A)
M318 +Madonna Imaculate col (A)

EDUCATION

E001 +Kids Paint (A)
E002 +Colour It (A)
E003 +Treasure Search (A)
E004 +Learn & Play 1
E005 +Learn & Play II
E006 +Spanish Translator (A)
E007 +Education Graphics
E008 Mr Men
E009 +Astromy (A)
E010 +Simon & Space Math (A)
E011 +Education Disk 1 (A)
E012 +Education Disk 2 (A)
E013 +Education Disk 3 (A)
E014 +Education Disk 4 (A)
E015 +Education Disk 5 (A)
E016 +Education Disk 6
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E023 +Talking Colouring (A)
E024 +Easy Spell II (A)
E025 +Scrabble (A)
E026 +Words (A)
E027 +Oswald (A)
E028 +Ariochs Astrology (A)
E029 +Ariochs Astrology (A)
E30 +Evolution (A)
E31 +IQ Test + 10 Games (A)
E33 +Keyclick II
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E51 +Invisible World (A)
E52 +Fish Tank Sim
E54 +Demolit Mission (A)
E55 +Word Power (A)
E56 +Worm Hole (A)
E57 +Apple Catcher (A)
E58 +Maze & Crypok (A)
E59 +Verb Quiz (A)
E61 +King James Bible A (A)
E66 +Tarrot A (A)
E67 +Tarrot Disk (A) B
E68 +Gallow (A)
E69 +Treasure Trap
E70 +Math Drills (A)
E71 +Error Info (A)
E73 +Picture & Letter (A)
E74 +Amiga Begin Guide (A)
E75 +World War 2 (A)

CLIPART

CA01 +Colour Cartoon
C015 +FS Clipart (1-5)
C024 +Harlequin Vol 1
C025 +Harlequin Vol 2
C026 +Harlequin Video 1
C030 +Fonts & Surface
C027 +Dynamite Fonts 1
C027 +Dynamite Fonts 2
C028 +Amsoft Font Clip 1
C029 +Amsoft Font Clip 2
C030 +Various Font
C031 +Exile Font Clipart
C032 +Disney Clipart
C033 +Comic Clipart
C134 +Space Clipart
C035 +Gelenite Fonts (3)
C043 +Rip-Font & Logo
C044 +Colour Clip Art 1
C051 +Clip Art Vol (1-20)
C101 +IFF Pic Clipart (1-24)

FONTS

F001 +FS Font (1-5)
F015 +Deluxe Paint Font 1
F016 +Deluxe Paint Font 2
F017 +Deluxe Paint Font 3
F018 +Deluxe Paint Font 4
F020 +Halc Font (3)
F023 +Computer Eye Font 1
F024 +Computer Eye Font 2
F025 +Fancy Font Volume 1
F040 +Digi Font Volume 1
F045 +Mega Font Volume 1
F050 +PS Logo Font (1-9)
F050 +C.G. Font (1-7)
F070 +Pagestream Font (1-6)

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S151 Mega Modules (1-6)
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S172 House Samples B
S173 House SamplesC
S174 Noise Less. Mozart
S175 Korge Sample (3)
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Flights

Ever since man has walked the earth, he has been perplexed and obsessed with flight and the ability to defy gravity. The awakening of this dream was triggered initially by birds. The Egyptians worshipped them as gods, as did the Incas, Mayans and many other early high-tech cultures.

The Greeks were probably the first to write about flight when they told the tragic tale of Icarus and his doomed maiden voyage, simulating the flight of a bird.

As we follow a path through the annals of history, conquering his inability to transcend to cloud level has been man's greatest single desire.

The artist Leonardo Da Vinci designed the first prototype helicopter, and the Montgolfier brothers craned our necks a little nearer to the stars, by defying gravity with the first flight in a hot air balloon.

But, it wasn't until the turn of our present century on that fateful day at Kittyhawk that the Wright brothers finally satiated the desire.

Following this significant breakthrough, mankind really rolled his proverbial sleeves up and got stuck in. Frank Whittle develops the jet engine, bi-planes became mono-planes which in turn have become delta-winged supersonic craft capable of breaking the sound barrier.



picture: Redifusion

For a privileged few, the sky really has become the limit, and that's the way it was set to stay until the technology race in home computers began.

For the majority of us, the chance of piloting any sort of flying craft used to sit only in our wildest dreams. Whether it be the cost, the ability or the practical availability doesn't really matter, because the realisation of the obsession is still a runway to far.

Until recently, that is. Computers mean that flight really can take place in your front room. There's is no mystery as to why flight simulators have been developed so intensely for home, civil and military use. The answer's very simple and lies in the very first paragraph – we are, and always will be, obsessed with flying and its emulation.

So, without further ado, let's zip up our bomber jackets, adjust the chin straps on our helmets and peruse our instruments, while we indulge in a few pre-flight checks down memory lane.

Combat Air Patrol
Psygnosis

First completed about a year ago, CAP encountered production problems and was held back until very recently. As we speak, CAP is probably the newest simulator to roll off the production line.

Combat Air Patrol is an accurate reproduction of the F-14 Tomcat and the F-18 Hornet, two of the United States' most trusted combat planes.

Set in the Gulf War, your primary objective is the expulsion of enemy forces within the boundaries of Kuwait.

In CAP you not only have the choice of planes to control, but you also take on the role of stormin' Norman and command all of the land-based forces.

As with the majority of flight simulators, Combat Air Patrol follows a pattern that you are no doubt very familiar with: armaments screens, difficulty levels and so on.

What makes CAP that little better than many of its simulated opponents is the 3D engine. Psygnosis have come up with an amazingly slick system, which is probably about the smoothest seen on an Amiga.

The beauty of Combat Air Patrol is that it plays as smoothly on an A500 as it does on a A4000, leaving no-one disappointed at pretty graphics and no playability.

Overall, CAP is an extremely competent player in the simulator market and features some very clever little touches that will keep you stimulated for a good while.

F/A-18 Interceptor
Electronic Arts

AMIGA

Although it's now one of the more mature Amiga simulations, Interceptor has found its way into the collection and the hearts of many potential aviators.

Released in 1988, it came to many of us early Amiga owners by virtue of the fact that it was part of one of the first titles to be featured as a bundle package. Designed by leading flight simulator Bob Dinnerman, Interceptor was the first to give you the choice of flying more than one jet.

Set over the skies of San Francisco, you have the option of flying the F-18 Hornet or the much celebrated F-16 Fighting Falcon. Based either on a carrier or land, Interceptor sends you on progressively more challenging missions, from the learner mission of identifying an unknown jet, through to successfully sinking an enemy submarine.

Interceptor sits heavily on the entertainment side of simulation. There are flight manoeuvres that you can pull off in Interceptor that the military would be green with envy for.

Nevertheless, Electronic Arts freely admit that Interceptor is more of a fun sim, than a realistic seat in a cockpit.

Although the graphics are a little dated, with simple polygons to display buildings and fairly slow screen updates with the enemy plane very often only appearing as a speck, the play doesn't suffer profusely. Likewise, the flight area and missions are a little restricting, but Interceptor still has a great deal to offer. It was one of the innovators of such things as external camera angles, zoom facilities and most of all its highly playable and instantly accessible fun.



Domark

Here's an unusual departure for a flight simulator on the Amiga. For one, it's the only attempt to replicate a craft that is capable of VTOL, and secondly Harrier asks more of you than the normal pre-set missions you normally get in a flight sim.

One aspect of your role is to command a landing force of US troops in hostile terrain, the other is to control a squadron of Harrier jump jets.

Set on islands around south-east Asia, your job is to offer support for the invasion force as they push further inland, and protect them from both air and land-based enemies. Harrier contains all the hardware and options you've come to expect from the newer breed of Amiga simulators. The Harrier being a Vertical Take Off and Landing craft, the control system takes some getting used to when you first take the helm.

Nevertheless, it doesn't take too long before you get used to the fact that you can practically hover and land as a chopper might.

Constructed from a variety of vector polygons, the graphics in Harrier Assault are as competent as the majority of flight sims.

Harrier is most playable, and will be best utilised by true enthusiasts who can devote the time this accurate simulation needs. Harriers only downfall is that the 3D engine seems to struggle on normal low end Amigas, and is probably best played on larger accelerated machines like the A3000 and A4000.

of fancy

Flight simulators have always been big business in the home computer market, for games players and enthusiasts alike. Simon Clays de-mists his goggles, takes a retrospective look and sorts the best from the rest

GUNSHIP 2000

MicroProse

Until a year ago the definitive helicopter simulation would have been a toss up between Thunderhawk or 2000's older brother, the original classic Gunship. Times have moved on and MicroProse programmers have given birth to a new prodigy. Gunship 2000 puts you at the controls of a range of the world's deadliest helicopters.

Once you've trained yourself up from squaddie, you can choose to fly in central Europe or the Persian Gulf. After you've been assigned to a region, 2000 has a wide range of missions that will be offered to you by the CO.

Gunship 2000 has all the normal munitions screens and maps, but what really sets it aside is the graphics. For Gunship 2000 MicroProse developed a completely new 3D engine which incorporates an updated terrain mapper which gives contour to the landscape.

The ground detail is also brimming with life and contains a rich array of roads, tunnels and even the odd camel. Once you reach higher ranks it's possible to gain promotion, have a unit of choppers at your disposal and get the chance to fly the deadly Apache gunship.

Gunship 2000 is fast, as realistic as you wish to render it, and packed with a basket full of explosive action. You have all the normal external views and zoom options, plus an excellent missile camera which sits you on the front of your warhead as it hunts its quarry. MicroProse have come up with the best flight simulator of any type for the Amiga. Its fast-paced action and graphical quality make it a must for any flight enthusiast.

A320 Airbus

Thalion



The world of the civil airliner has seldom been undertaken for the Amiga. So, it was a welcome release when Thalion revealed their simulation of a medium range, fly-by-wire modern airliner the A320 Airbus.

Obviously, it's a far cry from the electric world of the jet fighter and lacks the thrills of aerial combat (unless you get hijacked that is), but is regarded as one of the most realistic simulations to grace the Amiga.

A320 comes in two packages, one based in Europe and the other newer addition sits itself in the United States.

Programmed by an ex-Luftwaffe pilot, you start in the briefing room, setting your payload, route details, freight and fuel. You can even set the height of the cloud base which determines the use of your ILS system.

Also, at the higher levels of this simulator, weather takes its course and means you have to plan an alternative flight path to divert to.

Graphically, while Airbus's visuals are realistic, they aren't worth writing home about. Your view is from the left-hand side of the control panel. However, function keys divert you to other alternative views.

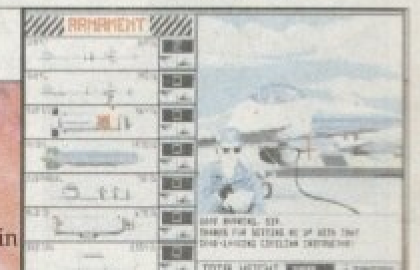
The ground detail is also very spartan, but manages to convey the general impression of an airport. Sound, while limited, is effective enough and the engines were actually sampled from the genuine article.

These things apart, Airbus is a totally accurate representation of a modern passenger airliner. It requires you to react and co-ordinate all of the necessary equipment at the correct times from take off through to landing procedures.

While not containing as many thrills and spills as many of the flight sims on the market, Airbus is a fine exploration of civil transportation which is worth spending some time with.

FALCON

Spectrum Holobyte



If you take into consideration the fact that Falcon was released in 1987, it features an astounding level of realism and gameplay.

Falcon also came with two mission disks which featured enhanced graphics, extra features and improved joystick response during flight.

The original program sat you in the desert somewhere in the Middle East. Here you could train yourself, fly missions against enemy MiG-21s or attack enemy installations.

Following on from Falcon, the mission disks put you into a full-blown war zone. Your job was to achieve air domination against MiG-21s and dreaded 29s, then slow down the enemy war effort and keep their tanks from over-running your runway.

Graphically, Falcon is excellent. From the smoothness of the screen update to the detail and accuracy of the cockpit, Falcon is a more than adequate performer.

The sound effects are also very effective, whether it be the whistle of the Gatling gun, the hiss of a missile as it roars away from its housing and engages itself or the raw power of the afterburners cutting in.

Falcon also features a black box option which allows you to retrace the footsteps of your flight, and a full complement of state-of-the-art weaponry and defence systems. However, the ultimate thrill is to fly head to head against another player, via a modem cable.

With different difficulty degrees and a full range of ranks to fly at, Falcon is one of the most complete fighter sims available to Amiga owners, especially as all three come at budget prices now.

THE F-16 FIGHTER SIMULATION — Spectrum HoloByte

Fighter Duel Pro — Jaegar Software

If you're a hard-bitten sim veteran, the appeal of launching yet another heat seekers from 25 miles out may well be wearing a little thin. After all, it's hard to get excited about a few pixels suddenly vanishing from a radar screen.

If the aforesaid cap fits what you really need is a copy of Fighter Duel Pro. Now I'm not saying it's for everyone, but if your primary interest is in-fight realism, it's unbeatable.

As you can see from the screenshots, the graphics aren't exactly breathtaking. However, it's only when you're at the controls that you experience the most realistic in-flight experience in the business.

Even on an A500 it's smooth as silk and when this is combined with incredibly accurate flight characteristics of both yourself and the opposition, the meagre graphics are soon forgotten.

However depending on your point of view the program does have one major fault. Put simply, it does what it does, namely ultra realistic dog-fighting – and little else. You're given the choice from a variety of prop-driven fighters for yourself and either one or two opponents. You can mix and match to you hearts desire assigning an appropriate skill level to each bogie.

During combat the bad guys are exactly that, swooping, diving, attacking and evading with a degree of realism which drags you into the action like no other sim on the market.

As for control analogue is best – in combination with a decent mouse to handle the throttle and rudder. Like every other dog-fight sim head to head combat is supported either via modem or direct link. It's even possible to use a second Amiga to supply a constant rear view of the action.

Basically if you enjoy realistic close-up combat and can live without fancy graphics it's quite simply the best seat of the pants flight sim on the market.

Reach for the Skies
Virgin

Reach for the Skies pushes you back through the mists of time to World War II, or the summer of 1940 to be precise, during the Battle of Britain.

Programmed by Rowan Software, the company behind Flight of the Intruder, the first decision to thrash out is which side to fight for. You can become part of the illustrious Luftwaffe, or play the backs-to-the-wall role of the RAF.

Once that decision has been taken, much of the game time is spent in the air. Unlike many simulations, control is taken for an entire squadron, with the option to flit from plane to plane at a whimsy.

The 3D is very effective and fairly speedy, although for best results it's best played on one of the high-end machines. Reach for the Skies also features a full range of external 3D views and a zoom option.

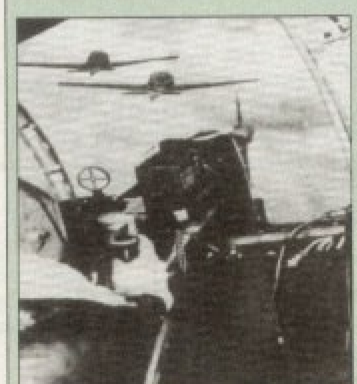
Flight while highly playable, isn't one of the most realistic of simulations and control of your Spitfire or Me-109 is relatively simple.

Reach for the Skies does however contain many nice touches. For example, after every flight you have a full replay option. You also have the ability to start missions from mid-air and you can also accelerate time.

Reach for the Skies should have received higher accolades, and would have done, if not for glitches in the programming which has resulted in several bugs.

Niggles aside, RFSK is still quality entertainment and still sits proudly in the hangar of fame.

What do the big boys play with?



Flight simulators for the military and civil airlines are perhaps older than the majority of us would believe.

As early as World War II, gunners on bombers were trained in replica gun turrets, shooting at screens which had enemy fighters projected on to them, with a camera recording where the bullets would have struck.

Since then things have progressed somewhat. Pilots now train in multi-million pound hydraulically-powered cockpit replicas, which train pilots more safely and reletively cheaply.

In the simulator world, if a crew put their 747 down short of the runway, they might well have to swallow their pride but they'll live to talk about it, and the airline can still fly its airliner.

There are versions for almost every type of commercial plane flying today. Inside the instrumentation and flight envelopes are reproduced exactly.

Today's simulators are so accurate that some pilots are able to convert from one jet to another on the ground, and then take their new plane into the air without any further training.

The leading edge of simulation is in the hands of the military who are utilising the technology of virtual reality to throw their pilots into war zones which are frighteningly real.

These VR simulators are bringing a new level of realism which give the pilots a true insight into both the conditions and the brutality of modern war.



picture: Evans & Sutherland

Knights of the Sky
MicroProse

Knights of the Sky switches away from high powered jet engineering and the pin-point accuracy of modern missile technology and flips the calendar back to days gone by.

Gone are the fire-and-forget missiles which obliterate an unseen enemy, and vanished are the oh so helpful HUDs which keep you up to date with everything around.

In fact, in Knights of the Sky all you're left with is a pair of leather gloves, some goggles and a rickety bi-plane.

KOTS is a World War I simulator and puts you right in the thick of it, fighting on the Western front. Once you're fully trained, you can fly a whole variety of missions in one of up to 20 different biplanes and mono-planes.

The missions vary from supporting a bombing run, through to buzzing Zeppelins in a balloon-bursting exercise.

As you progress through the war you are updated with information about other enemy pilots in the region. If you fancy your chances in aerial combat, then you can lay down the gauntlet and hunt for them, in your own search for fame.

KOTS features graphics that are very effectively rendered and planes that fly fairly smoothly. In the sound department, there isn't a great deal, but what is there is adequately dealt with.

By far the most exhilarating aspect to KOTS is the dogfighting. Because of the range and accuracy of the on-board machine guns, you have to fly close to the opposing fighter to score any hits.

You also have the tricky flight control of a bi-plane to combat and overcome. All of this gives you a great sense of achievement when you see it give of grey plumes of polygon smoke.

With a multitude of external camera and chase views, an action replay mode and a new budget price, Knights of the Sky is a very worthy addition to your flight sim collection.

Simulator stimulator

As the Amiga has progressed and developers have become more adept at programming, so the standards has improved.

However, in the last 12 months a ceiling seems to have been reached. The technology inside a standard Amiga has been utilised to the full and the polygons can't move any faster or become any more detailed.

If we look across the showroom carpet over at the PC market, it's clear to see that PC simulators lead the way. Rather than large polygons with colour and definition limitations, PCs are moving detailed bit-mapped objects around the screen at a very realistic and rapid rate.

Nevertheless, this doesn't mean that the Amiga world is never going to be worth flying around. Recent innovations like the CD32 with its planar chip have brought promise of a new breed of flight simulator.

Cheshire based DID have been working on the much awaited TFX, which features a combination of complex polygons and bitmapped graphics to give an new level of realism. Both the planes and ground detail feature this technique to great effect.

It's not just in the graphics department that TFX should set a precedence. It also features a more advanced way of simulating flight.

On the majority of Amiga sims currently available, the planes always turn at the same angle as the horizon. Unfortunately this is not absolutely accurate to real flying. In true flight the horizon lies at an altogether different angle to the turn of the plane and the pilot's perspective. This extra dimension, which brings a new level of realism, is encompassed in TFX.

With this type of innovative development about to hit your monitors it could definitely be time to take to the sky's once more.



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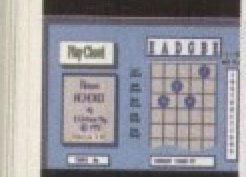
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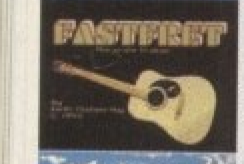
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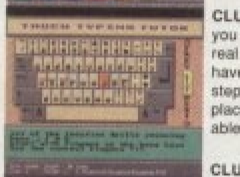
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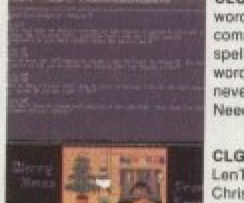
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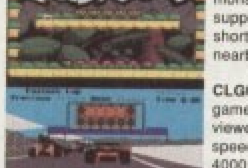
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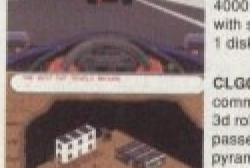
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CLG030 CAPTAIN K This is an exellent platform game. The object of the game is to collect all the items scattered around each level & kill all the monsters. For this purpose you have an unlimited supply of bombs, which when thrown, bounce for a short time before exploding, killing any monsters nearby! 1 disk 3.50.+



CLG041 F1 RACER This is a very professional game, 3d graphics in a Formula one type vein as viewed from the driving seat. Speed is subject to the speed of your machine (it really zooms on an Amiga 4000!) Lots of fun for anyone who likes driving games with super graphics & sound! Very impressive game . 1 disk 3.50.+



CLG042 CRYSTAL SKULL This was written as a commercial release but was never released! It is a full 3d role playing "Dungeon Master" type game, speak to passers by, kill them, investigate any one of 4 pyramids with all its ghosts & gobilins. This will keep up your interest for ages! 1 disk 3.50.+

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BG004 EMERALD MINES 04
BG005 EMERALD MINES 05
BG008 EMERALD MINES 08
BG009 EMERALD MINES 09
BG010 EMERALD MINES 10
BG011 EMERALD MINES 11
BG012 EMERALD MINES 12
BG013 EMERALD MINES 13
BG014 EMERALD MINES 14
BG015 EMERALD MINES 15
BG016 NO ONE MINES 01
BG018 NO ONE MINES 03
BG020 NO ONE MINES 05
BG021 NO ONE MINES 06
BG022 NO ONE MINES 07
BG023 NO ONE MINES 08
BG024 NO ONE MINES 09
BG025 NO ONE MINES 10
BG026 NO ONE MINES 11
BG027 NO ONE MINES 12
BG028 NO ONE MINES 13
BG029 NO ONE MINES 14
BG030 NO ONE MINES 15
BG031 EASY RUPPLE MINE
BG032 RUPPLE MINE 1
BG034 RUPPLE MINE 3
BG035 RUPPLE MINE 4
BG036 RUPPLE MINE 5
BG039 DOWN UNDER MINES 3
BG040 DOWN UNDER MINES 4
BG041 DOWN UNDER MINES 5
BG043 DOWN UNDER MINES 7
BG046 DOWN UNDER MINES 10
BG047 DOWN UNDER MINES 11
BG048 DOWN UNDER MINES 12
BG049 DOWN UNDER MINES 13
BG050 DOWN UNDER MINES 14
BG051 RECYCLED MINES 01
BG052 RECYCLED MINES 02
BG055 RECYCLED MINES 05
BG056 RECYCLED MINES 06
BG057 EAT MINES 01
BG058 EAT MINES 02
BG060 MARATHON MINES 02
BG061 MARATHON MINES 03
BG062 OZ MINE 01
BG063 OZ MINE 02
BG064 VENOM MINE 01
BG065 VENOM MINE 02
BG066 VENOM MINE 03
BG066 DE BOND MINE 01
BG067 DE BOND MINE 02
BG068 DE BOND MINE 03
BG069 DE BOND MINE 04
BG070 DE BOND MINE 05
BG071 DE BOND MINE 06
BG072 EMERALD RUNNER 01
BG073 EMERALD RUNNER 02
BG074 EMERALD HEAD
BG076 COLD CAVES
BG077 PRO EM MINE 01
BG078 PRO EM MINE 02
BG079 ACE MINE 01
BG080 INTO THE HISTORY HOLE
BG081 INTO THE CRUSTY MINE
BG082 LADYBIRD MINE KIDS
BG083 EASY GHOST MINE 01
BG084 BOULDERDASH 64
BG085 BOULDERDASH CONSTRUCT KIT
BG086 BOULDERDASH DIGGER 01
BG087 PRO BOULDERDASH 01
BG088 PRO BOULDERDASH 02
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The best selection of PD games ever assembled anywhere now all autoboot on A1200! (though not all games will run)Something for everyone!

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ASI 7 Moonbase, Trix,Nightworks Cloudcruiser!+
ASI 8 Airace2,Hball,Snakepit & Numberfumbler!+Y
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ASI 31 Arazmaz,Crazy pipe, revolution etc!+ Y
ASI 32 Blob, Sector one & Firefighter! +Y
ASI 33 Hyperball & War! 2 good games+Y
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ASI 35 Poing,Snakepit,Cybernetix Jump n roll!+Y
ASI 36 Mother lode, Wonderland, Kong Tactix!+Y
ASI 37 Klakitris, Ghostship, Paccer etc!+Y
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ASI 77 Balloonacy, Cliff hanger & Descender! +Y
ASI 78 Little Boulder, Headgames Fruit Panic! + Y
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ASI 117 AirWarrior, Triple Yachtzee & Yoopi! +Y
ASI 118 Zombies, Armymines 14 & The last Tetris! +Y
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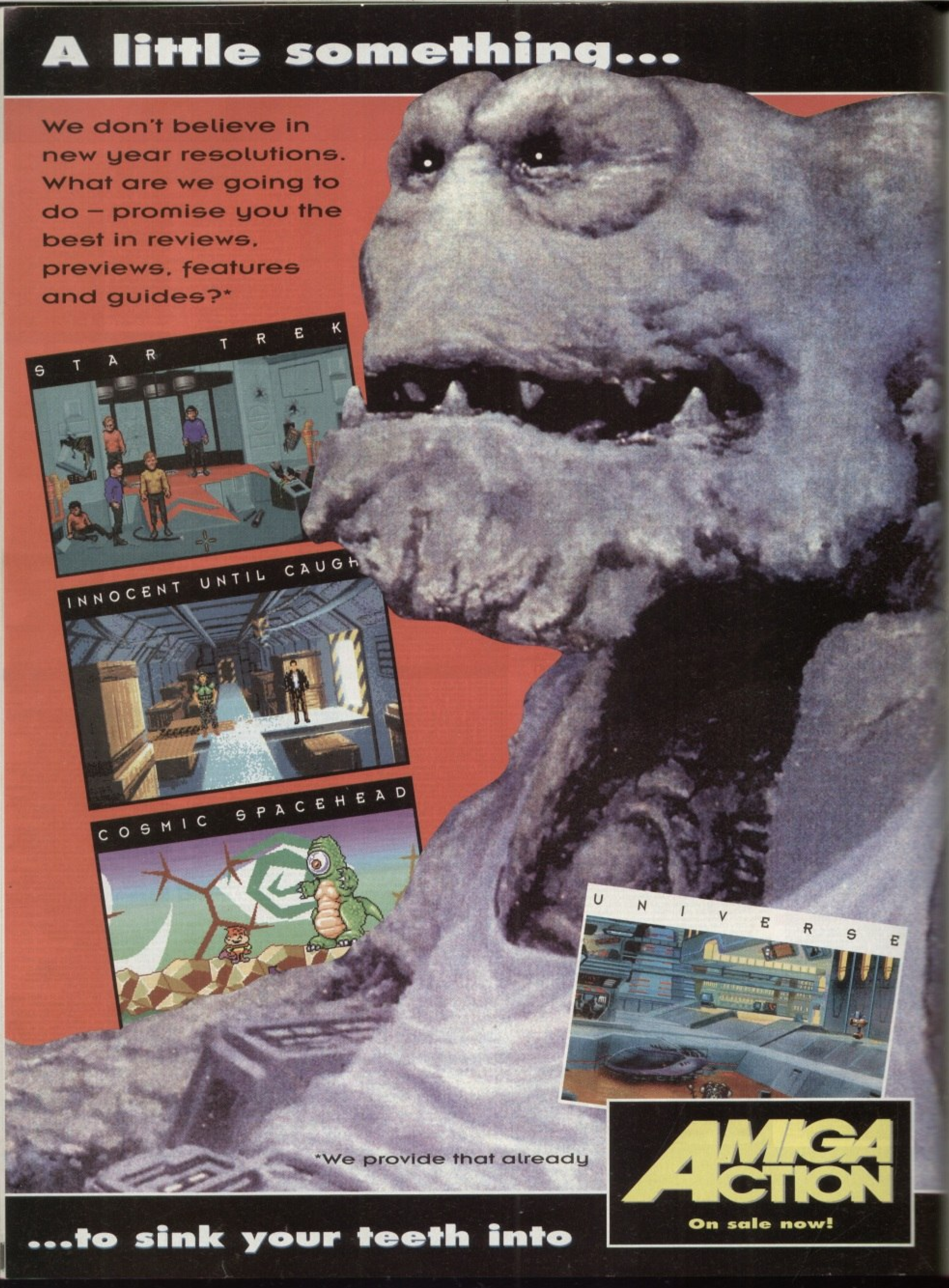
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F or those who've not enjoyed the Adorage experience in its previous incarnation, a little background information might be in order. For any newcomer the first question has to be: What exactly lurks behind the rather exotic title?

At its most simplistic Adorage is used to breath life into a static image by applying any one of a huge range of preset wipes and dissolves to introduce or remove the chosen graphic.

Repeating the process over multiple images means you can append numerous images within the same animation, forming a continuous sequences with each image boasting its own designer intro and out-tro.

In addition you can add background images to further enhance the effect, allowing the chosen graphic to glide effortlessly over the selected backdrop. However, be warned – mixing foreground and background graphics does require a little care in relation to the palettes of the chosen graphics, although of course it is possible to specify which palette is applied in the finished animation.

Although a pleasant touch, the use of backdrop images does have its limitations, especially on slower machines. As a consequence Adorage is usually at its best when used in conjunction with a genlock – and it's



in this situation where it really shines, providing a great alternative to the sometimes predictable efforts of DPaint and the infamous Move requester.

Better still, Adorage uses its very own SSA – super smooth animation – format which as the name suggests offers a fairly dramatic improvement over Anim5.

As for the new elements, the notables include AGA support, two new banks of effects and a slight revamp of the front end which now boasts graphic icons as opposed to the old text-based approach of its predecessor.

Apart from these fairly elementary changes there's not a lot else on offer, although the AGA support does add improved colour along with a more professional feel to finished anims.

Basically Adorage in its new form is great news for the AGA brigade and that's about it. In truth little has changed since the release of the original package, but to be fair it was pretty impressive the first time around so there's little to complain about – apart from the slightly optimistic asking price.

Product: Adorage
Supplier: BVCC
Price: £79.89
Tel: 081-567 4623

Musical pictures

AMIGA Update



As promised, AirLink makes a comeback along with the long-awaited AGA update to Adorage

AirLink

AirLink was mentioned last month in relation to VLabY/C and its unique ability to grab unlimited sequential 24-bit frames from live video without the need for timecode of any kind.

The only problem is the heavy dependence on user time as the software demands constant tape rewinds ready for the next pass. However thanks to AirLink and the supplied programmable infra red transmitter, all the donkey work can be done automatically.

To achieve this, AirLink makes extensive use of ARexx, linking both VLabY/C and the new 16-bit Toccata sampler, which when added together enable capture of 24-bit video and 16-bit audio simultaneously.

However AirLink's control potential doesn't stop with its VLab and Toccata associations. In fact this ingenious infra-red can turn its invisible talents to anything that ships with a handset – whether that be a sampler, tape deck, CD player, VCR or whatever else.

Automated Midi

As mentioned earlier AirLink can be put to work on any system that uses infra red, and as a result it's developed quite an affinity with Midi, especially in relation to Bars&Pipes Professional, courtesy of its extensive ARexx support.

However before you plan controlling an entire recording studio from the comfort of a mother keyboard, it's worth remembering that all AirLink commands temporarily halt multitasking, as a result its usefulness for live performance can be limited.

However there is a way around the problem. If you have a second Amiga, it can be used to receive Midi information from the parent machine running the sequencer, which in turn could send the commands to the remote via AirLink without pausing the performance.

Even with one Amiga the performance potential of AirLink is still pretty impressive. For example it's possible to issue AirLink commands in relation to specific Midi data, so at the beginning of a song you could hit a key on your synth to activate a CD player, tape deck, VCR or whatever else. All that's required is a little set-up work before hand – and of course any set-up can be saved out and used as many times as you want. In short, the sky's the limit, if it's got a remote, AirLink can control it – whether it be via mouse or Midi.

And of course each remote has a unique signal so you can control as much equipment as you like from a giant on-screen button bank with various sections for all manner of hardware.

Product: AirLink
Price: £69
Supplier: Amiga Centre Scotland
Tel: 0896 87583

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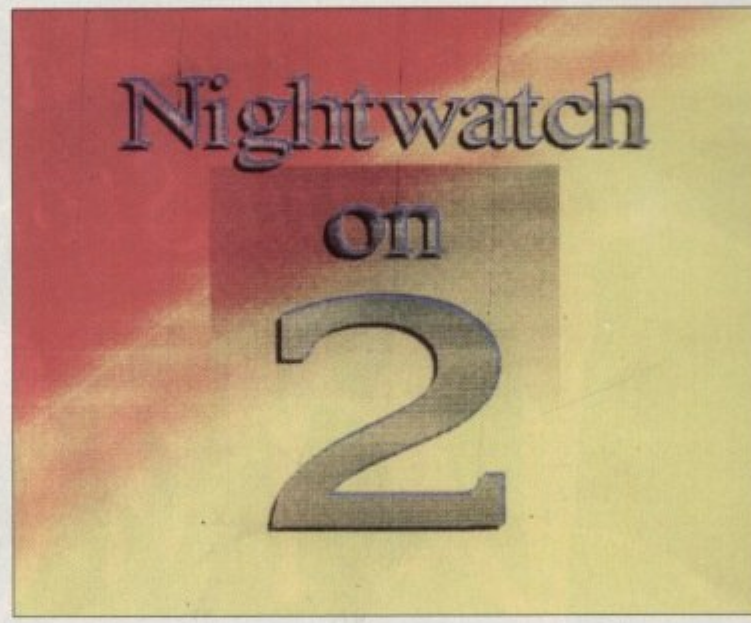
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Hot to trot

Star's new thermal transfer printer is a colourful performer, as Stevie Kennedy found out



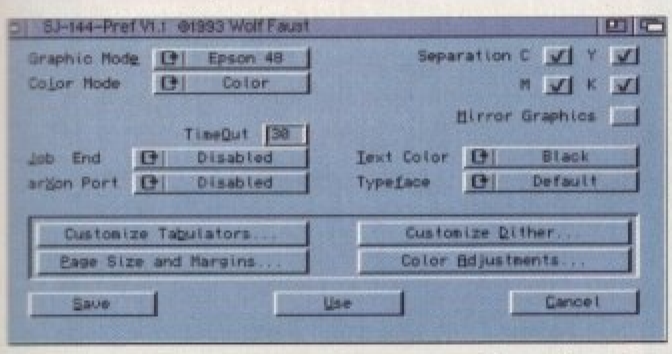
Banding such as shown here can be eliminated using the control panel

With the presence of myriad affordable inkjet, dot matrix, and thermal transfer colour printers in the Amiga market, competition for the lucrative middle ground has become intense, so Star's latest product, the StarJet 144, has a lot to prove. Battling it out with the likes of the HP DeskJet 550C and Fargo's Primera is not an easy task, but the SJ-144 brings with it an impressive combination of a low price tag and a quality of output to match many more expensive units.

The printer itself is one of those diminutive units which begs comparison with the BJ10, consisting of a stand up body, a flip-out sheet feeder capable of holding 30 sheets of paper, and a front loading option for single sheets. When plonked on a desktop the result is a very small footprint and a cute little addition to the electronic family.

Setting up the SJ-144 is a simple job and can be accomplished without reference to the manual, but software installation has to be the most user-friendly aspect of the whole package. Wolf Faust, responsible for some excellent Canon software, has produced a preferences program specifically for the Star range which not only offers close control of all aspects of printing but has an accommodating feel which should put most beginners at ease.

During installation the user is asked to choose which printer driver to install and is then given an opportunity to set the default StarJet preferences such that once installation is complete the printer is primed and ready to go. If the user feels prone to leave defaults well alone, a custom prefs program can be found in the usual Prefs drawer for later tweaking, giving everyone the chance to make the best of their new acquisition.



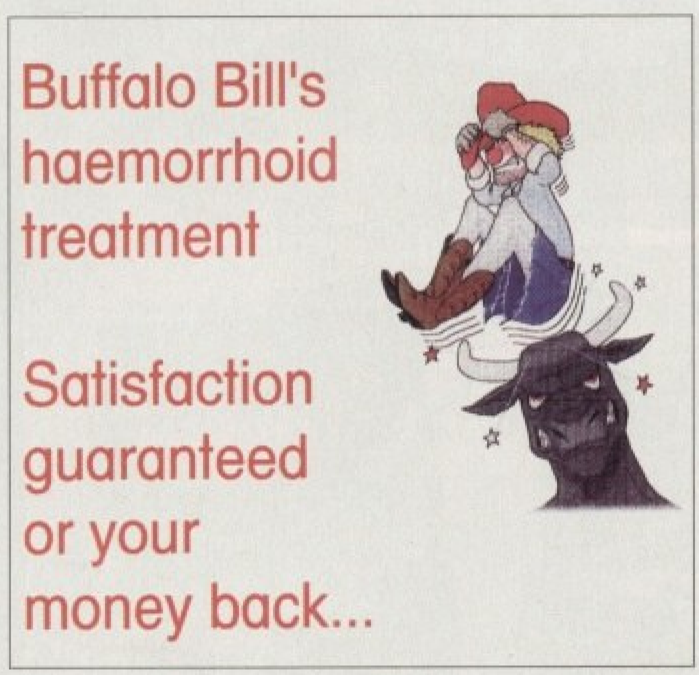
The excellent prefs program gives users more control

A starter kit including 30 sheets of thermal printer paper, a colour and a black ribbon can be found in the box, so there's no reason why full colour pages shouldn't be popping out of the SJ-144 only a few minutes after installation. Once printing starts, however, the user might be in for a bit of fiddling to attain the best results.

Our test model's first few attempts at printing colour pages resulted in a marked banding effect similar to that which most owners of cheap dot matrix printers will find all too familiar. Thin white horizontal lines appeared across the finished page which ruined what was an otherwise rather tasty output in terms of colour approximation and resolution. Much head scratching ensued until a quick phone call to Star and a dive into the 92 page manual brought the answer.

The SJ-144 is blessed with a useful and comprehensive front panel which can be used for the usual paper feed and so on, but which also controls the mechanical operation of the print head. By holding down two of the buttons while turning the printer on, a test mode is enabled and all sorts of trickery can be employed to improve output.

Clicking the Zoom and Paper buttons will move the bands of printed colour closer or farther away from each other in increments of 1/720th of an inch, a microscopic adjustment which ensures the user should reach the optimum setting after a few tries. This is very effective as a tweak, but it has the drawback that several sheets of the supplied thermal paper and a certain amount of the ribbon's life must be sacrificed to it. Once satisfied that banding has been eliminated, the user just holds another button down until the macro indicator confirms that the setting has been stored, and the printer should come to heel on every subsequent boot-up. Given the method of printing used by the SJ-144, this is an inevitable drawback, but at least there is a fool-proof way to circumvent it.



Text and graphics output is very clean at 360 dpi

All hardware settings having been chiselled in ROM, the user need only experiment with the many dithering options available through Mr Faust's prefs program until the best results are achieved, and when print density is set to its highest (360dpi) these can be very attractive.

Quality judgements are purely subjective and based on the dithering option used, but the SJ-144 seems to have a definite edge on the HP550C and is very close to Fargo's Primera, though it could never match the latter's Dye Sublimation output. For the asking price, Star's latest launch is an attractive buy for those in need of a logo generator or something to give those letterheads an extra burst of vivacity.

Judging print costs

Like all colour printers, the SJ-144 must also be judged on a cost per page basis, a job which is trickier than it seems. Manufacturers seldom use the same standards when quoting the number of pages achievable with a standard printer ribbon, but Star's touchstone is at least based in the real world.

Using a 1500 character letter (roughly 250 words on a page) Star claims that the average yield from a monochrome ribbon should be 180 pages, and 8 full coverage (8.0 by 9.6 inches) colour pages from a colour ribbon, which works out at about 75p per colour page and 3p per black and white letter.

Users can buy a pack of three ribbon cartridges from Star for £18, and overhead projector film comes in at about £9 for 100 sheets. Thermal paper is of course recommended, but the SJ-144 has the advantage of accepting plain paper as well, which is cheaper if not as effective.

The bottom line

Product: SJ-144
Supplier: Star Micronics
Phone: 0494 471111
Price: £569

Ease of use 7
Implementation 9
Value for money 8
Overall 8

Love never dies – in Bram Stoker's Dracula





This month we've put our heads together with Columbia Tristar Home Video to bring you a truly excellent Dracula competition

Following on from the amazing success of the cinema film, Psygnosis' Dracula game for the Amiga will soon be released. As well as the game the selection of prizes also consists of two great videos just out – Bram Stoker's Dracula and The Making of Dracula, directed by Francis Ford Copola, and the Dracula board game, plus the CD soundtrack.

The Dracula story follows the original Gothic version of the love-torn bloodsucking Count. As Transylvanian prince Vlad Dracul returns from battle to find his beloved wife has taken her life believing him to be killed in battle, he denounces his allegiance to God and embraces an eternal and immoral existence in the shape-shifting body of a dreaded vampire.

Many centuries later Dracul meets Jonathon Harker, an estate agent, and discovers that Harker's beautiful fiance is a reincarnation of his own long lost wife, Mina. The drama continues as Dracul attempts to seduce Mina while Harker engages in a fiercely passionate conflict to defeat the tragic Dracul.

To enter this Gothic competition all you need to do is send your answers to these three simple questions and the tie breaker on a postcard to Amiga Computing Dracula Competition, Europress Direct, PO Box 2, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral L65 3EA. Don't forget to give your name and address and let us know if you don't want to receive promotional material from other companies.

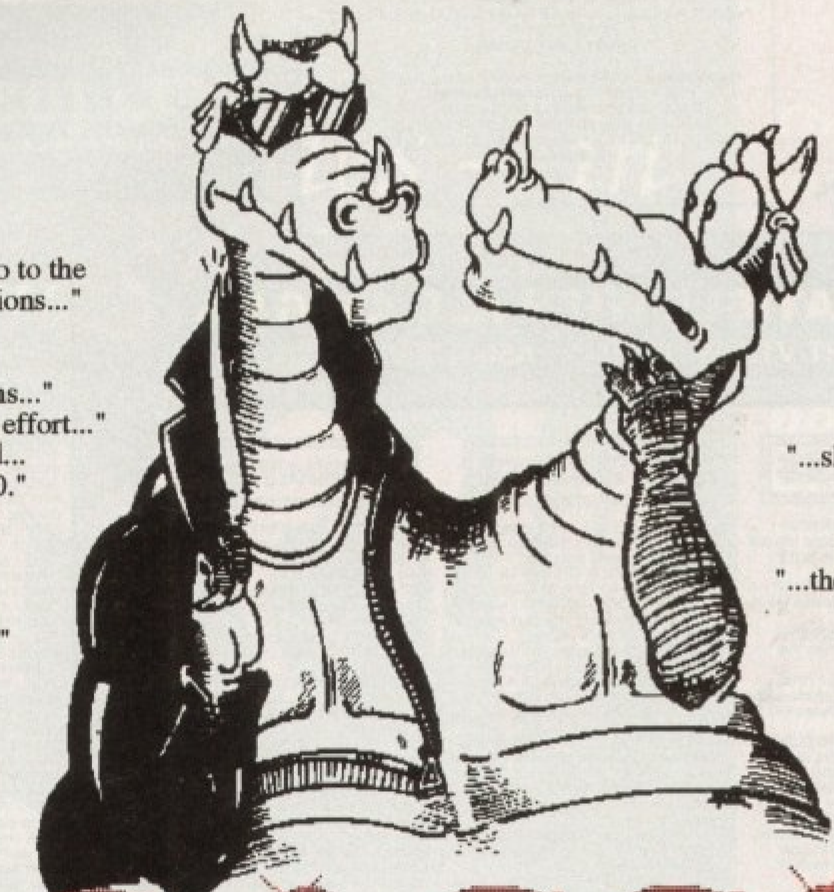
***Question One** – Who directed this version of Bram Stoker's Dracula?*

***Question Two** – As well as the game, the two videos and the CD soundtrack, what is the other prize?*

***Question Three** – Name one of the things that will deter a vampire.*

***Tie Breaker** (in no more than 20 words) – Count Dracula was a good bloke really because...*

Entries should arrive no later than February 28, 1994. The prize winner will be drawn from all the correct entries received and will be informed in writing within two months of the closing date. Result information may be obtained by writing to our offices. The editors decision is final, no correspondence will be entered into.





Fax with the trappings

Paul Austin examines TrapFax, a revolutionary software package that could add that yuppie touch to your modem

If you've attended any shows or spent much time on-line lately you'll be all-too-aware that faxing is the in-thing when it comes to comms and electronic communication in general.

But what if you bought a modem that has the potential to become a fax but simply hasn't got the appropriate software? A decent modem isn't cheap so the prospect of selling up just to have a fax facility on a similar spec modem isn't exactly appealing.

Now thanks to Village Tronic upgrading is no longer a necessity, courtesy of some ingenious software which can add a fax facility to any Class 2 modem.

In other words the majority of older and slower modems running at or below 2,400 baud may not be compatible, and unfortunately the same is true for any Class 1 modem – which includes such notables as the US Robotics Courier HST and Sportster.

Although not an ideal situation, the problems surrounding Class 1 modems have been spotted and are being addressed. As a result, keep a close eye on *Amiga Updates* for a promised upgrade which should enable class 1 modems to use the software.

Not being a comms fanatic, the prospect of reviewing TrapFax didn't exactly fill me with unbridled excitement. However much to surprise the whole process was – dare I say it – quite enjoyable.

CREATION

After kicking up the optional hard disk install and spending a few minutes with the excellent accompanying manual I was ready to send my first creation across the acres of carpet between me and the *AC* fax machine.

The first order of business is to set up the TFaxPrefs which specify your name and number, initialise the modem and define the source and target directories for incoming and outgoing faxes.

It's at this point where I thought things could get messy with initialisation strings, baud rates and all the other things which make comms the ultimate anorak pastime.


TrapFax is capable of excellent text and graphics transmission

However in keeping with tradition the whole thing is blissfully simple and only took a few seconds to set up. Aside from this, the only other job is to select "fax" as the preferred printer driver.

As you'd expect, the aforementioned driver comes as part of the package and is used to convert the output of any program into a format which can be sent via the modem. The only criterion is that the program must have access to the preferences printer driver.

To make switching between your printer and fax driver as simple as possible, a small utility automatically switches the two drivers for you, so there's no need for any manual labour whatsoever. And better still, multiple serial boards are also supported, so you won't even have to switch cables. Intuitive design at its best...

As far as the source software is concerned there's no difference between the two drivers, but instead of popping out on paper the file is converted and then redirected to the outgoing fax drawer.

When the printing process is complete you're automatically switched back to Workbench at which point a small requester appears asking where your creation should be sent, or if it should be kept aside for later use.

From the same requester you're also given access to the phone book. It's also possible to specify when the fax should be sent and how long the software should attempt to transmit – thereby allowing for any errors or busy lines to be retried.

Obviously the real attraction of timed transmission is its money-saving potential. If you're making long distance calls you can specify that the fax is sent at the cheapest possible time.

Assuming you've chosen the appropriate destination you're returned to the main window where the fax is sent or stored. Better still, TrapFax offers the ability to send the same fax to innumerable destinations.

All that's required is a few extra trips to the phone book, or alternatively you can add new numbers directly. When all your destinations are safely installed in the recipients list a click on OK button kicks the process into life.

PiLE UP

After successful transmission the original fax can either be kept or deleted depending on preference. If it's kept the original file is simply moved from the outgoing into the sent drawer while incoming faxes pile up in a drawer of the same name.

If you've had a heavy faxing session in the early hours you can check out who got what, if not, why not, and when, with a quick glance at the TrapFax.log over breakfast. Prior to or even after transmission you can view you creations or incoming faxes via another utility which pops up with an AppIcon allowing a variety of scaled views of any fax either received or sent.

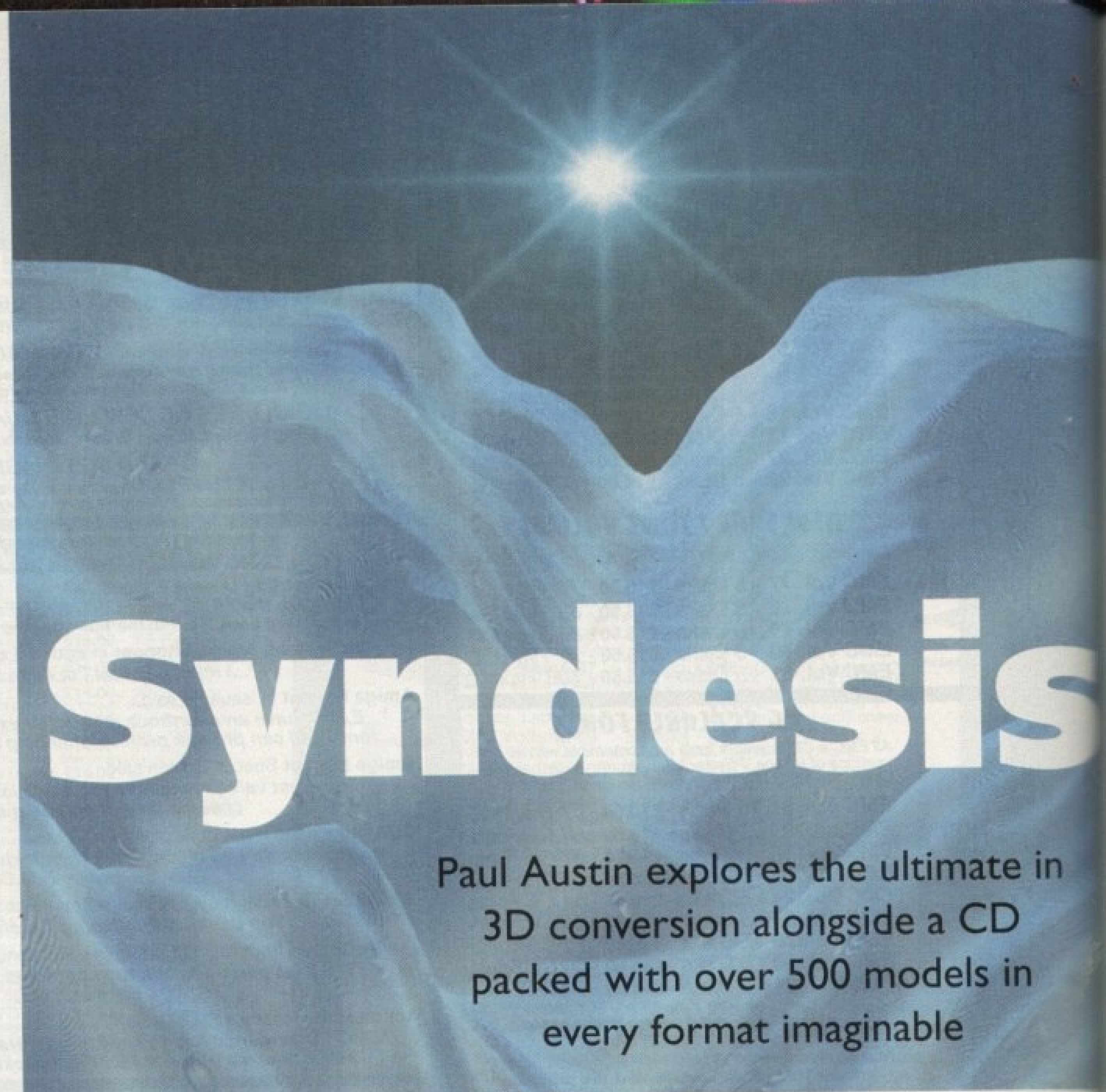
If you need hard copy the TFaxView utility also supports printing of both graphics and text – which of course means you have to swap drivers.

The only area in which TrapFax falls down is faults. With the exception of sending the same fax twice on one occasion, it appears faultless.

Of course the restriction to Class 2 modem only will limit its appeal initially, but come the upgrade TrapFax could well become an essential for any modem owner. AC

Ease of use 10
Implementation 6
Value for money 8
Overall 8

Product: TrapFax
Supplier: Blittersoft
Price: £74.95
Tel: 0908 220196



Syndesis

Paul Austin explores the ultimate in 3D conversion alongside a CD packed with over 500 models in every format imaginable

From DEM file to Lightwave object. Planetary scenes and animation are now simpler than ever before thanks to InterChange

Over the last few years the Amiga has become the machine to beat for ray tracing and 3D modelling in general. Alas with its increasing success have come a vast array of modelling formats – all with their own individual approaches to the subject.

Unfortunately with their individual successes, each program becomes marooned on its own little 3D island. As a result it's been difficult – if not impossible – to share models successfully. And as for sharing the best modelling elements of each, forget it.

With such restrictions, upgrading from one package to another has involved some torturous decision making. Should I throw away all that hard work and start afresh, or stick with my existing outdated software? What a nightmare.

To be fair some, packages do make an effort to load other formats but these are few and far between, and of course software companies have a vested interest and tend to avoid contact with direct competition like the plague. For example Imagine2 will load Turbo Silver and older versions of Imagine but nothing else.

IMPORTS

Due to user pressure some of the latest programs such as Imagine2.9 and Real 3D v2 offer support for DXF – a format supported by the majority of CAD packages.

This has its uses for corporate logos, and architectural fly-throughs but DXF imports are notoriously tricky and often requiring as much editing time as it would to start from scratch.

To be honest the problems associated with model conversion hasn't gone unnoticed by third-party developers. As a consequence there are a reasonable variety of conversion programs – which again are usually tied to a particular product or concentrate on font conversion rather than model sharing.

Even so there has been one notable exception in the form of Pixel 3D Professional. Costing around £250 it ranks as perhaps the most expensive ray tracing software peripheral in the business.

Unfortunately even this pricey program has some fairly serious limitations, most annoying of which is faulty conversion of complex objects.

Although the package can convert between 14 different formats they're only really useful when used on simple or individual sub-objects. To be fair Pixel 3D Pro is designed to be more than just a conversion utility. In fact features such as 2D extrusion and point editing are all part of the overall system. As a result the program excels at 2D to 3D conversion and subsequent point tidying, but for straight conversion it still leaves an awful lot to be desired.

Enter the Syndesis Corporation with InterChange Plus, the conversion program and utilities suite we've all been waiting for. Now just to save time I'll become completely over excited early-on and return to the review in a few paragraphs.

Being a dyed-in-the-wool modelling maniac the prospect to free-ish access to a limitless supply of models from both the Amiga and PC is quite simply manna from heaven. And of course any of your own classic creations can now live again within new productions.

As for conversion quality the results are quite literally astonishing. After extensive testing the program barely put a polygon out of place. After my initial amazement at converting a selection of models complete with their correct hierarchical structure and including colouring, transparency, diffusion and specularity – where appropriate.

Even subtle aspects such as Imagine subgroups were spotted retaining their own colours, attributes and surfaces during conversion. Obviously texture maps aren[illegible] integral part of the model and need to [illegible] replaced later on.

However for the ultimate test I thou[illegible] we needed something big, and they d[illegible] come much bigger than a Vista/Scen[illegible] Animator DEM file.

Unfortunately a complete map of [illegible] Grand Canyon proved just too big for [illegible] machine, however after a little tinkering [illegible] smaller region did the job.

Admittedly the first few attempts [illegible] throw up the odd glitch as assorted poly[illegible] appeared to poke out of what should [illegible] been a smooth surface.

FINE TUNING

Fortunately each InterChance conve[illegible] a separate module with its own internal [illegible]erence requester allowing you to fine [illegible] the conversion process to suite the [illegible] software.

After doing exactly that, the afore[illegible]tioned DEM converted perfectly and [illegible] directly into both Imagine and Lig[illegible] without a single glitch. This is even [illegible] impressive considering the new impo[illegible] sisted of over 16,000 points and [illegible] polygons.

Admittedly the finished Lightwave [illegible] came to a rather staggering 535,832k – [illegible] be honest the end result was worth [illegible] byte. As well as far superior conve[illegible] InterChange also has the added bo[illegible] incredible speed. In the past a Pixel Pr[illegible]

Syndesis 3D-ROM

In addition to InterChange Plus, Syndesis have also released a CD-ROM packed with over 500 models ranging in quality from the unspeakably crap to astonishingly impressive – with somewhat fewer of the latter than the former.

Perhaps the best description of the CD comes from the packaging itself which reads: "A spectacular demonstration of a new 3D translation technology called InterChange Plus."

The word to concentrate on here is demonstration. Although there are examples from professional model makers the vast majority are PD examples which have been simply copied onto the CD and translated into the various formats in order to demonstrate the power of InterChange Plus. As a demo it's certainly pretty impressive with all 500 models offered in each of the following formats 3D Studio, AutoCad, WaveFront, Lightwave and Imagine. Quite why Syndesis are asking the same price for the CD as InterChange Plus – given that the vast majority are PD models – is a mystery – not the mention mildly annoying.

To be fair examples of the modelling prowess of InterChange aren't the only things on offer. In fact a collection of over 400 mirror tiled texture maps also come as part and parcel of the CD – ideal for modelling and general multimedia applications.

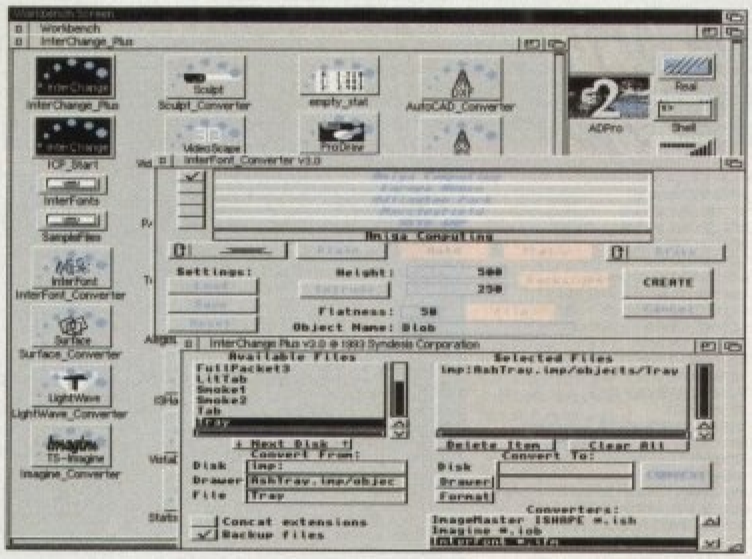
Thanks to aforementioned textures the 3D-ROM does manage to claw back a reasonable degree of value for money, but to be honest $199 for what is essentially other peoples work combined with a selection of texture maps is just a little too much.

However, for the professional videographer it does make a useful reference library – ideal for the occasional prop to add that finishing touch to a near perfect scene.

version usually involved a very long coffee break, if not a three course meal. InterChange on the other hand is astonishingly quick and will convert a fairly complex model in a matter of seconds. Bliss absolute bliss.

Now we've covered the end results it's worth mentioning exactly how they were achieved. Basically you have two options. You can either fire up the main program and double click on the required conversion modules individually or go for the direct approach and double click on ICP Start which automatically loads the entire suite of converters.

Regardless of the approach the end result remains the same with a small requester popping-up on Workbench allowing selection and saving of the original and converted model along with the required converter.



Simple but effective, just select your object, click on a converter and it's all over in a matter of seconds

synopsis

Aside from file selection and saving, there's little else to do apart from defining whether you want backup files or wish to concatenate file names – thereby keeping a history of the model's source software in the form of an add-on to the existing file name rather than a direct replacement.

For the vast majority of conversions that's all you'll need to do. Simply select the file, define the target directory and convert. However if problems do arise you can repeat the process but prior to conversion a double click on the chosen converter will allow you to do the necessary fine tuning.

Fortunately the accompanying manual is both friendly and thorough so any adjustments shouldn't be too painful. However in certain cases opening a modules requester is essential – as not all are dedicated entirely to conversion.

It's in this area where InterChange modules enjoy at least some of the added utility features found within Pixel 3D Pro. For example one of the most impressive utility modules adds font conversion the InterChange repertoire – via the InterFont converter.

In addition to the converter you also receive an InterFont Designer along with 23 InterFonts designed by Syndesis plus another 48 licensed from ARock Computer Systems. These fonts can be loaded, extruded and converted to into the DTP or 3D format of your choice via the aforementioned InterFont module. It will even add justification, centring, bold and italic along with user defined surface attributes.

Another utility entitled Surface Converter allows the attributes of objects to be loaded and converted to InterChange format for easier attribute matching between formats.

If statistics are more to your taste another module allows a text file to be generated describing the structure – in point/edges/faces, colour and its surface attributes of any object.

As for model manipulation you're provided with a reduce points, scale and snap to grid – each of which employ the same modular approach with their own pop-up requesters.

All this talk of conversion utilities and requesters may well give the impression complexity. However rest assured that 99 per cent of conversions require no additional editing whatsoever and are usually complete in a matter of seconds.

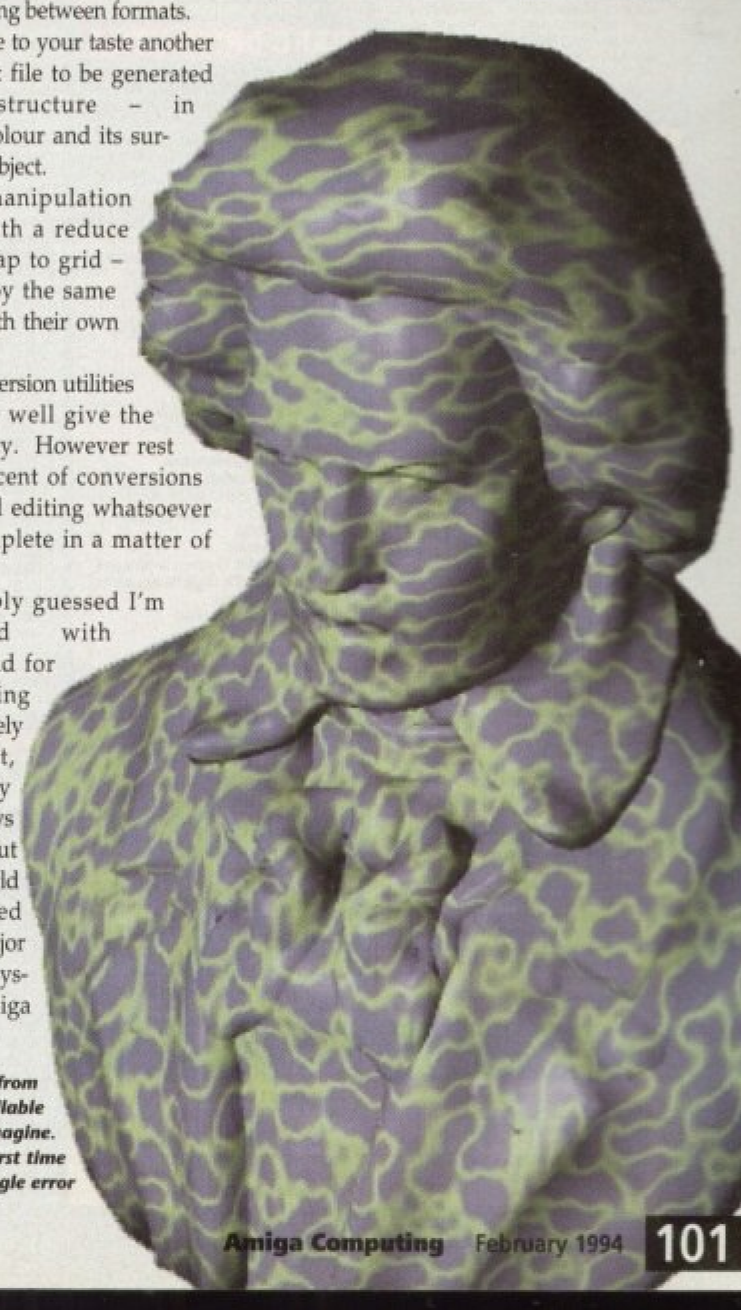
As you've probably guessed I'm pretty impressed with InterChange Plus and for the serious ray tracing community it's definitely a must have product, which will not only save hours – if not days – of modelling time but also open a whole world of perfectly imported models from all the major CAD and Modelling systems on both the Amiga and PC.

Supported formats

Lightwave objects and scenes
Imagine
Turbo Silver 2.0 and 3.0
VideoScape 1.0 and 2.0
Sculpt 3D/4D scene and script
PAGErender
Atari ST CAD-3D
Professional Draw, Aegis Draw
ImageMaster ISHAPEs
Vista DEM digital elevation maps
3D Studio
Wavefront.obj
AutoCAD DFX converters



A couple of classic objects from Sculpt converted first time without a single pixel out of place



A famous face from Lightwave now available for use within Imagine. Again imported first time without a single error

The bottom line

Basically InterChange Plus is an essential tool for any serious 3D enthusiast while the 3D-ROM is reasonable – if you're either a cut and paste ray tracer or a professional who can envisage recouping their investment courtesy of improved productivity.

However be warned, although many of the models are impressive the majority are fairly run of the mill and could probably be duplicated by an experience user in a matter of a few minutes.

Product: InterChange Plus
Supplier: Syndesis Corporation
Phone: 0101 414 674 5200
Price: $199
Ease of use: 10
Implementation: 10
Value for money: 8
Overall: 9

Product: Syndesis 3D-Rom
Supplier: Syndesis Corporation
Phone: 0101 414 674 5200
Price: $199
Ease of use: 10
Implementation: 10
Value for money: 8
Overall: 9

PUBLIC SECTOR

Adam Phillips looks at the latest PD releases from all over this snow-swept land



A new year and a fresh crop of games and utilities to wade through. If it's been a new year's resolution to buy more software then there's no better place to start than here in the Public Sector. Keep the titles rolling in, no matter how bizarre, strange and weird – I want to see them...



Go carefully round the corners – suspense and atmosphere all play a part in Black Dawn...

Black Dawn

Programmed by: Andrew Campbell

Available from: Pathfinder PD
Disk No. PG219

Black Dawn is one of those PD games that lands inconspicuously on my desk among a pile of others with no fancy wrapping or glittery packaging but on slipping the disk in to the drive and booting up, it blows the reviewer away with its sheer professionalism and playability.

Set on a large spaceship... contact has been lost... drifted in space for centuries... recently turned up on deep space radar and so on. The player must embark on this three-mission demo to work down through the craft, accomplishing various tasks and blowing away the aliens that infest it.

This is Alien Breed meets Dungeon Master as you creep down the twisted corridors with baited breath dreading what might lurk around the next corner. Along the way, differing suits of armour and weapons can be bought to top up the continually ebbing supplies.

There are plenty of surprises in store such as large metallic balls that lie in the corridors of the ship that need to be pushed out of the way but carefully so as not to block an exit.

The graphics are a high standard with varying species, from tentacle creatures to green dinosaur heads, that cause untold damage. The sound as well is very effective if a little sparse – start shooting something off in the distance and the following hit registers quietly but as the enemy closes in, the louder the sound of impact becomes.

This must be one of the only PD titles that I've played all the way through to the end. Admittedly there are only three levels to complete but this is still a worthy buy.

If Andrew Campbell intends to add several more missions with varying objectives, more weapons and creatures to the finished version, I don't see why he should have any problem selling this on to a company to be released as a commercial game. Excellent.

Magic Workbench

Programmed by: Martin Huttenloher

Available from: Graphic F/X
Disk No UT 132

Have you ever noticed how bland the Amiga Workbench looks – single tone colours in the background, dull icons in the foreground – and how in desperate need of a facelift?

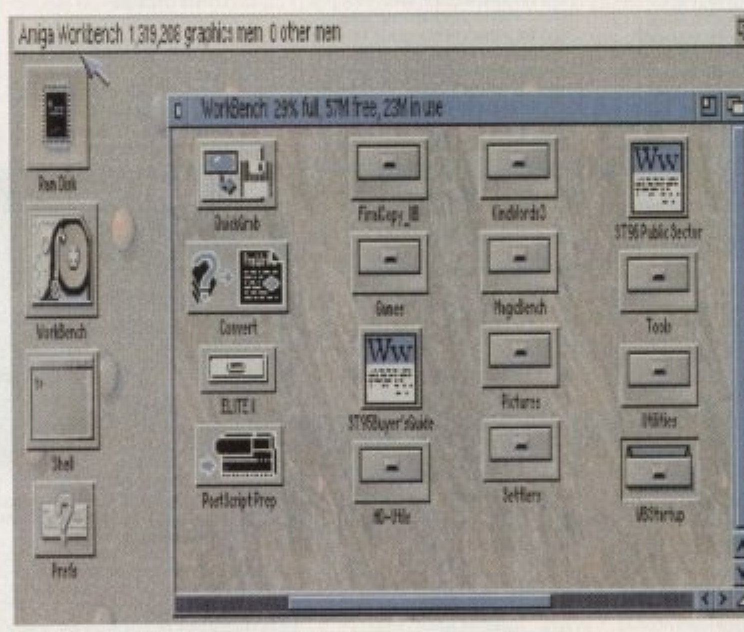
Magic Workbench is the plastic surgeon of utilities which enables the user to strip away the old and install a new, all improved and prettier face for your machine.

Coming on a single disk, it offers a multitude of 40 different backgrounds for Workbench 3 owners (or one for WB2 and lower), a fresh set of attractive-to-the eye icons and fonts, a sample inserter (change those wee little noises your Commodore makes) and an opportunity to alter the pointer and busy icon through a limited art package.

All that needs to be done is a simple installation onto your hard drive and then select the rest. The graphics on offer are of a very high standard and tasteful (if a little too Laura Ashley in places).

The only negative point in the whole program is the lack of different types of pointers and sound F/X – these need to be provided by yourself.

You can install it on your floppies but make a back up of any disks that are being altered for safety's sake. Magic Workbench is an great buy and offers a great deal for such a small price. Your Amiga deserves this.



Out with the old and in with the new, all improved, slicker Magic Workbench...

Moose Drive

Programmed by: Graham Dean

Available from: Graham Dean

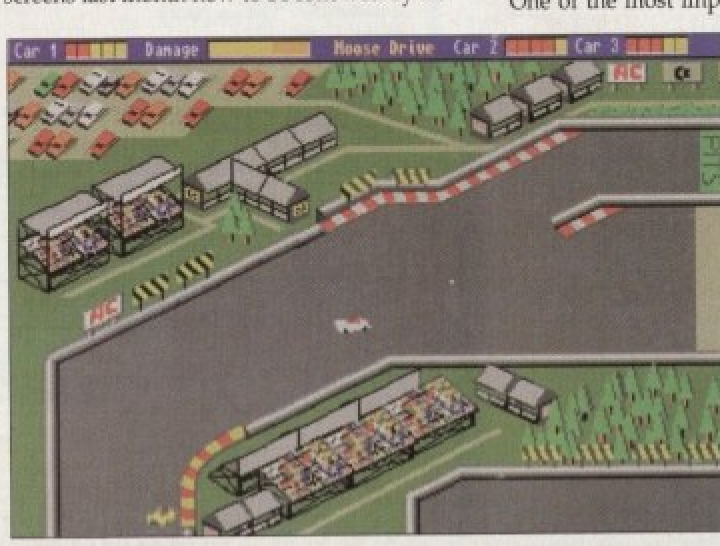
Racing games seem to be in vogue at the moment with Road to Hell gracing our screens last month now to be followed by an equally solid racer, Moose Drive.

Viewed in from above with a slight 3D tilt, this is a hectic race round a selection of ten tracks to become the ultimate moose driver (why? I don't know, I only work here). Two other cars join the player on the track to add to the competition and steadily improve both performance and speed wise as the races count up.

If by the second race though, you begin to feel a little cheated by the sheer Mansell handling of the opposition, don't give up too quickly – a hurried rummage through your race earnings to date will hopefully yield an upgrade to a better engine, batteries or tyres.

One of the most impressive features of this package is the large number of variables that can be changed by the player. Anything from car colour to the competitions' performance may be changed to suit your tastes.

While hurtling at a breathtaking rate



Why call a game Moose Drive? Answers on a postcard...

Fairlight 242

Produced by: Virtual Dreams

Available from: Mega Software

All the way from sunny Finland comes a computer pop video with music by none other than Papa Smurf (?). Coming on strong on one disk, Fairlight uses digitised video of somebody walking down a street intercut with various Nike-like blip captions that flash up and tell you to live life to the full.

Even though it all becomes rather repetitive after a while – if you took away the fancy chrome and green filter you'd be left with some pretty boring camera work of a spotty teenager walking into a magazine shop – it's impressive that it's all been done on the Amiga.

It's well taking a look if you want to see what stage the Finnish music scene has reached and to show what visual effects the continually surprising Commodore machine can pull off..



Beneath the rough and ready exterior beats the heart of a fiendish beat-'em-up

round the corners (and you really do in the later stages), it's possible to smash the car up which then needs to be driven to the nearest pit stop for a service.

This kind of attention to detail lifts Moose Drive from the usual mundane affairs into a smooth, slick little number with "dinky" graphics and quirky sound that can hold you on the edge of the seat when that damned finishing line always seems to be obstructed by the opponent's car.

Mad Fighters A1200

Programmed by: Kwok Man

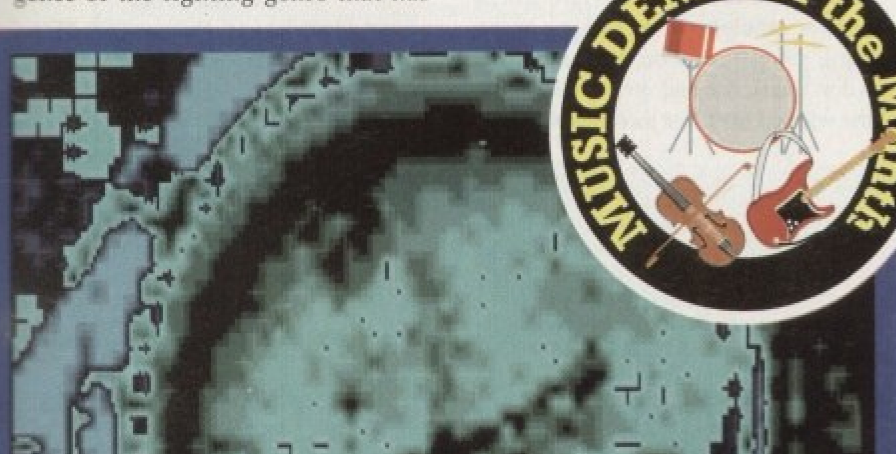
Available from: Roberta Smith DTP
Disk No RGA034

One of the greatest gaming phenomena of the last three years has been the emergence of the fighting genre that has become stronger than the platform following.

Streetfighter 2 and Mortal Kombat are the two main arcade monsters that eat school-kids' cash for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The Amiga has already had the delights of huge disk accessing conversions courtesy of US Gold and soon we can look forward to the delights of Mortal Kombat, hopefully with fully digitised blood, guts, gore, colon and intestines.

On the home front, Team 17 have been bashing away at the best beat-'em-up to date on the Commodore, Body Blows, and its follow up, Galactic Body Blows.

But what of the public domain and its offerings? As far as I can tell, they're a little thin on the ground. MadFighters will hopefully re-address this balance – a huge street war/competition with over 16 different characters in the full version, this game is an action fest.



Finland struts its stuff on the Amiga with this technically impressive demo

On booting up, the presentation of the whole thing may well put you off – they are very rough round the edges. Blocky sprites, clashing colour schemes and horribly basic looking front end don't help to encourage confidence in the game.

Choose from a wealth of options exactly how you want to fight – speed, difficult, knockout tournament or arcade mode among others – and then indulge yourself in some absolute mayhem as your chosen character is dumped against an enemy whose sole intention is to beat the living daylights out of you.

There are various moves such as throws and kicks but also included are a selection of the special actions. These range from a hurricane-style kick as seen in Streetfighter II, where the character whirls round in the air with legs kicking in all directions, to fireballs of enormous size.

This is all frantic, exciting action with good use of sound including digitised voices and crunching impact noises. While I have my doubts about the collision detection and the amount of skill needed to win, these questions largely remain unanswered because for one this is only a demo and two, I was having too much fun at the time. Apparently, the final version, costing £6, includes 16 different characters with three or four different special moves each, 16 different backdrops (only four can be chosen from in this version) and nine difficulty levels.

If you're still uncertain about

➤

Fantasy Slides

Produced by: Michael Zucchi

Available from: Kew = II • Disk No V1089

Here, for yet another month, is a selection of more fantasy art for all you dungeons, dragons, little elves, hairy dwarves, naked bum lovers and the like.

It's presented using a GIF displayer which according to the author is very fast, but unfortunately there are only four slides on offer.

On the positive side though, these are superb quality with 256 colours giving a quality rendering of the works of Boris Valejo, the artist behind three of the four images. Seeing that each image takes up between 100k and 300k, it's understandable that there are only four.

The GIF displayer can also be used with your own files, so for those with a leaning into the fantasy world, this will do until you invest in a Frank Frazetta book.



Dragons, swords and heaving buttocks are featured in this selection of fantasy slides...

Calling all PD libraries...

...and individuals with anything remotely worth my while having a peek at. If you want something released as PD, or you're a library with stacks of hot new stuff that you haven't seen reviewed in these pages yet, why not drop me a line with a copy, full documentation and everything clearly labelled? I promise I'll at least look at your work.

From music to education, business to utilities – anything you feel deserved your shoving onto a floppy disk, lemme at it and I'll do the rest. Address?

Adam Phillips, PD submissions,
Amiga Computing
Europa House, Adlington Park,
Macclesfield SK10 4NP

MadFighters because of the dodgy looking screenshot, then lay your hands on the demonstration disk and give it a try – if you're a fight fest fan, this could be what you're looking for.

Jigsaw!

Programmed by: Frank Arnot

Available from: Frank Arnot

Let's make one thing a little clear, I am not a fan of jigsaw puzzles – I've always had a problem with seeing little point in putting a picture together with 500 different pieces. Granted there is a modicum of satisfaction as the final piece slips into place but that's about it.

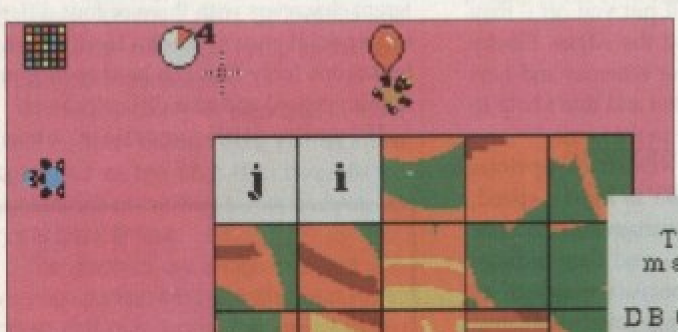
Well, imagine my *Viz*-like surprise when I booted this little title up only to be hooked on it for quite some time.

Set on a grid made up of 25 pieces, the player must reassemble a picture within the time limit. By selecting a piece, it can be rotated or moved around the board until the correct position is found.

The final image can be called up a certain amount of times for invaluable reference, as can a percentage indicator that tells how much of the puzzle is successfully in place.

During this hectic enough activity, matters are made complex by the advances of the Jitterbugs, a computer-controlled selection of Lemming-like creatures that change and move the pieces around.

Fortunately, it is possible to shoot the little suckers as they come on-screen, but once on the board itself, they have various powers to make your life a misery, from rearranging a single line to laying down a block piece. Jigsaw is a solid, fun and addictive game that works smoothly and its later levels can be accessed via the use of a password system. Recommended.



Solve the puzzle and shoot the Lemming-like Jitterbugs



Messerschmitt Bf 109

Produced by: Greendell Technologies

Available from: Various
Disk No (CLR) – CLE33

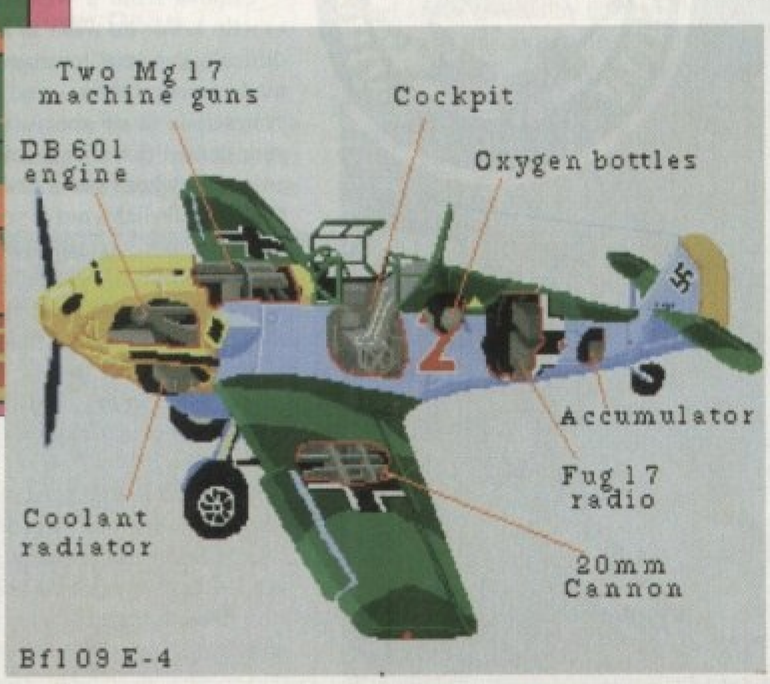
Decent educational software has always been thin on the ground with the preference being fairly placed on the games side of computing. Most "edutainment" is simplistic and invariably rather dull when compared to fun to be had with the likes of Alien Breed 2 and Cannon Fodder.

Messerschmitt is a multimedia-esque package which while not the ultimate in teaching software gives the user a full low-down on the plane and its role in history via an interesting and well thought-out format.

It's possible through a series of menus, icons and images to find out about the engine, weapons, cockpit and nearly anything else you could possibly want to know.

The system of user interaction works well – for example, when looking in the cockpit, simply press on the instrument you don't recognise and up pops the name of the selected item. For those interested in that old classic, the Spitfire, there is also a disk set available based on Blighty's aircraft, and as with the German equivalent, it is highly detailed and recommended for adults and children alike with an avid interest in war planes.





Learn about how World War II fighter planes worked and fought...

Grand Prix Manager 1993 Season

Programmed by: Ave Avid

Available from: Various

After the hands-on experience of Moose Drive, it was a pleasant switch to settle in the managerial and not the driver's seat in this Grand Prix management game.

Based in the office of a struggling businessman trying to make a break into the big league, between one and four players can take part with the objective of winning the championships five times within five years.

From behind your desk, contracts for drivers are negotiated, cars are bought, repairs made, weather checked, and other wheelings and dealings done.

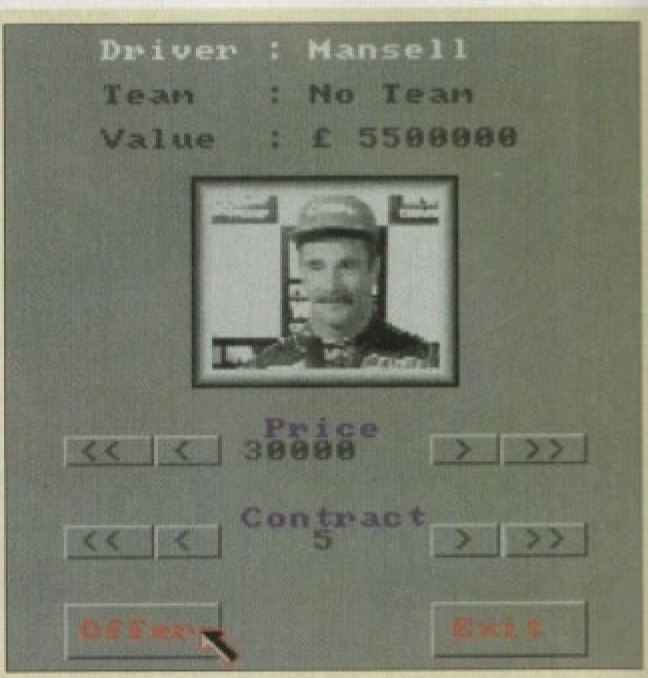
Some of this business is aided by the large-chested, mini-skirted secretary who wobbles her bits showing that, even in these times, some men can't resist a cheap "thrill/laff".

Once you've selected the people you want in your team, it's out for the big day to watch the races. These are viewed from above the finishing line where each lap is shown as the racers power past.

Intercut between this are listings of the positions held on the track, with events such as crashes being displayed along the bottom.

Unfortunately, the racing section takes up most of your time and as the cars whizz around 26 laps of a course, boredom settles in as you begin to wish there was a skip button.

The game seems to be a reasonable attempt at a racing business simulation but lacks any real variety to hold the attention. Might be worth waiting for the next season.



Race cars and make a bundle of wedge in Grand Prix Manager

Contact addresses

Frank Arnot
21 Sharp's Lane, Dundee DD2 3EU
(£5 for full version)

Graham Dean
14 Fielding Avenue, Poynton
SK12 1YX
(Cheques payable to the above name.
£5 for full version)

Graphic F/X
PO Box 69, Manchester M21 2BN

Greendell Technologies
25 Woodleaves
Hollywood, Birmingham B47 5BW

Kew = II
PO Box 672, South Croydon
CR2 9YS

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78 Bockingham Green, Basildon
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- +D162 ...Stealthy Manoeuvres (1 meg) ... Excellent demo
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Band of

GVP's Spectrum 28/24 graphics card is the latest board to offer EGS and its own brand of extras. Stevie Kennedy checks out the other end of the rainbow

We've seen a bit of an explosion in EGS activity of late. The retargetable graphics system (RTG) developed by Viona Systems and adopted by GVP for use on Spectrum has already been used by the GVP EGS 110/24, Peggy FMV card, and Piccolo graphics board, and has gradually earned recognition as an alternative display system.

Spectrum 28/24 is a newly designed low cost Zorro II or III card and fits in any spare slot, communicating with the CPU via the usual Amiga data channels rather than the blistering direct access its predecessor enjoyed when talking to the Combo's 32-bit local bus. The on-board blitter is a 28MHz chip, and though nowhere near as fast as its pricey predecessor, it can still move along a fair old lick.

Users for cards such as this are many and varied, not least among graphic artists and DTP specialists, and for improved productivity the speed at which Spectrum handles images is ideal.

Hardware scrolling through a large 24-bit image in smooth easy stages can be misleadingly easy at first, but try the same trick with a Ham8 file in DPaint 4 if you need to be reminded how slow it can be.

As usual with EGS cards, the most annoying aspect of the whole package is installation and setting the thing up to talk to the rest of your system, particularly the monitor.

Spectrum has a wide range of available screen modes, up to 1600 x 1,280, but many of the higher resolution modes will only work on expensive 17in multisync monitors with generous bandwidths.

The installation program offers a number of common display options to make life a little easier, including the Commodore 1950, but there is no entry for the 1942 – a strange omission given that this is already the most popular Amiga hi-res monitor.

Choosing the 1950 setting works well enough; so as long as the user makes the correct guess, everything should be fine. If a common or garden bi-sync or SVGA monitor is used, the best that one can hope for from Spectrum is 24-bit at a resolution of 800 x 600, and this can often be reduced to 256 colours if the monitor is less flexible. Most, though, should be capable of 24-bit at 640 x 480, which is good enough on a 14in monitor.

Signals from the Amiga's RGB port can be passed to the board then on to the monitor if required to give a pass-through capability such as offered by Piccolo, and the two monitor set-up is also available for those with a spare medium resolution monitor to take the standard Amiga display.

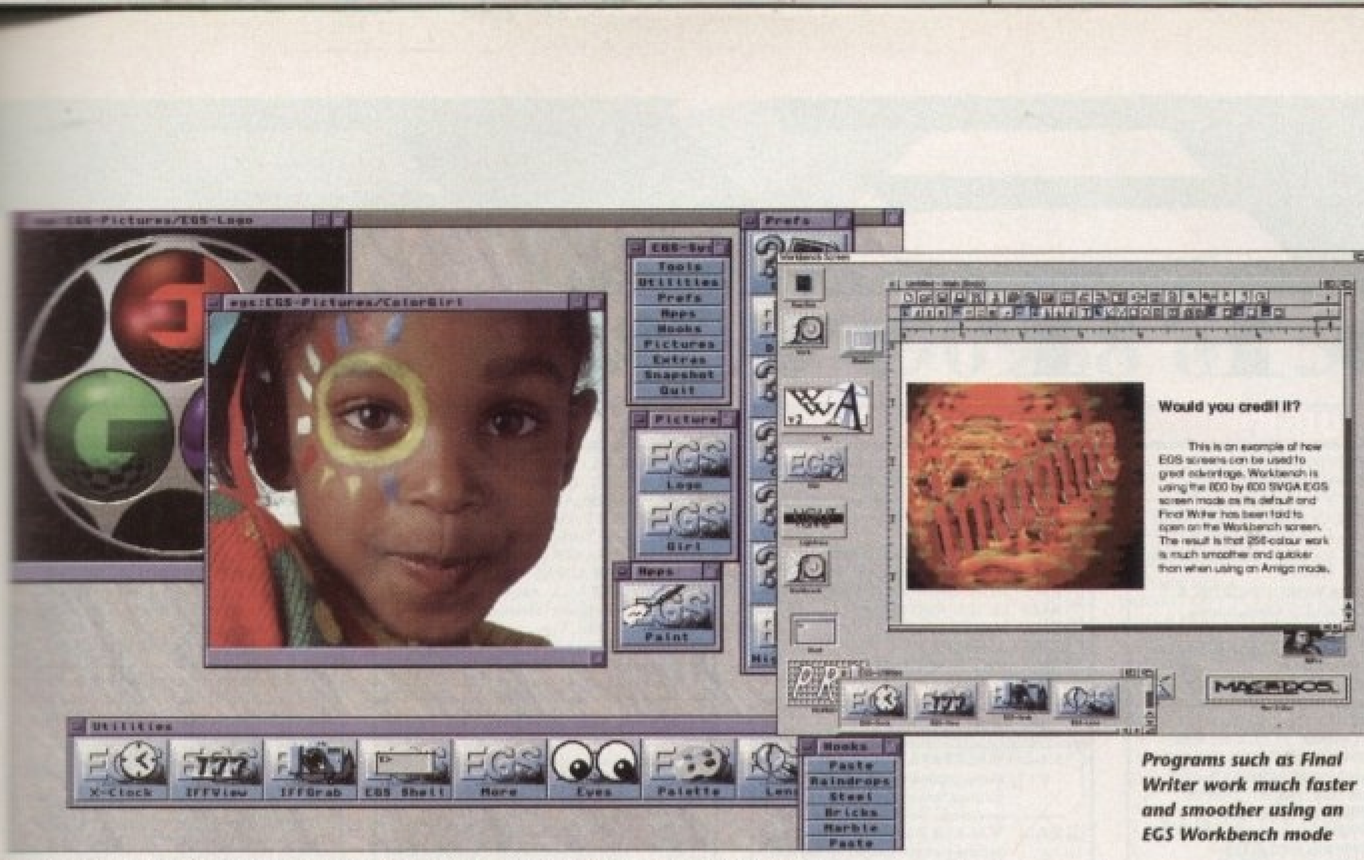
On first booting-up, nothing will happen as the EGS screen mode has not been set or selected, but setting this is a very simple task. The latest EGS libraries (v6.15 was supplied with our board) are much more reliable than some of their hapless ancestors, and make EGS screen modes available through the normal Prefs screen mode requester.

DISPLAY

Just open the Workbench Prefs drawer as normal and use the screen mode program to choose between a list of EGS display modes which should be available.

This means one can experiment until a suitable mode is found before saving the settings, after which the Amiga will boot Workbench into an EGS mode using up to 256 colours. The unfortunate side effect of





Programs such as Final Writer work much faster and smoother using an EGS Workbench mode

EGS Dock can be used as a sort of EGS desktop for all the supplied utilities and prefs programs

colours

this approach is that although EGS is now more system friendly, only programs which can open as a Workbench screen will benefit from the EGS display modes.

PageStream, Wordworth, and many other productivity packages will open on Workbench, but not all will and prospective EGS users are advised to check to ensure that their favourite software is suitable.

When an EGS Workbench is running, any program opening a custom screen will do so in the background and the user will have to use Amiga-N or M to switch to the new screen, which will not pop up in front of Workbench as normal. This can be a pain if the user was looking forward to using, say, Imagine 2.0 on the Spectrum display.

Older EGS emulation allowed for custom screens to be re-directed to EGS, but as these programs usually suffered from screen refresh problems the new system is more reliable if a little less flexible.

Flicking from EGS to other screens using the Amiga-M/N hotkey is easy enough, and EGS screens themselves can be pushed to the front and back using the depth gadgets, so no screen should be difficult to access.

In use, the first impression one gets of EGS, especially Workbench emulation, is that it is very smooth. Normally, a 256-colour Workbench will be tediously slow even on an A4000/040, but such a screen on the Spectrum display is easily as fast in operation as the normal 16-colour mode.

Opening a DTP package in 800 x 600 or greater using the 256-colour mode gives the user a hefty speed boost, particularly when scrolling through colour documents containing pictures. Spectrum's speedy operation and dedicated VRAM ensures that screen update is fast and smooth.

Owners of older Amigas will find less to rejoice about, as the way in which Workbench emulation takes place means that they still cannot open screens with more than 16 colours. Workbench revisions prior to 3.0 simply don't use more colour and EGS can't force them to.

However, the board's higher resolution screen modes are still available, as is the EGS display proper, on which any package designed to use the EGS libraries will open. This is a true 24-bit display (though it can be set to any depth the user wishes), and is used by the bundled paint package, EGS Paint.

Most of the huge array of libraries supplied on the EGS disks are used solely by the EGS display, and they include libraries for most common windows, gadgets, and requesters. This makes all EGS software very similar in appearance and operation, thus promoting more consistent design.

TOOLS

As usual, Spectrum is awash with utilities and support programs for use with EGS, including a battery of prefs programs and a collection of more or less useful tools. There's even a 24-bit version of Tetris at which I was able to demonstrate that more colours don't make good Tetris players.

Of most concern to the new user will be the preferences which control everything from the screen mode used when an EGS package is run to the fonts used in windows and gadgets.

There are settings for the mouse pointer, screen offset, and more or less everything normally associated with Workbench prefs, so it isn't much of a job to set the screen to suit one's tastes.

Extra programs include the ubiquitous clock and a handy 24-bit plotter program which will produce textured surfaces, not unlike rippling velvet, from any mathematical function. The 24-bit screen blanker is a particular show-stopper, and offers a few very odd but colourful patterns and animated effects.

One tool which would have given Spectrum an edge would have been a 24-bit animation previewer similar to the Retina board's MakeRACE utility. Such programs, though incapable of full screen video speed, can give the artist an invaluable 24-bit preview of any animation, and with its on board blitter and 2Mb of VRAM, Spectrum should be able to display double-buffered animations at about 15 frames per second.

This would of course be unsuitable for full-blown video work, but given that the board's output can be passed to an RGB-to-video encoder, and there is such a potential for fast 24-bit work, an animation or slideshow program would have been a big bonus for videographers.

As it stands, Spectrum 24/28 is a stable, high quality display card with solid EGS software of the latest version, better Workbench emulation than the v5 libraries we've seen up until now, and a burst of speed which can make 24-bit work easier than painting in 16 colours.

The EGS standard might not be the last word in RTG (Commodore have yet to release their own) but at the moment it is the best environment for alternative displays.

When it is aided by hardware which offers this speed for £399, the combination, though far from perfect, is a huge improvement on the slower AGA chip set and knocks spots off ECS displays.

Any EGS system currently available could say the same, but Spectrum's speed gives it an edge over everything other than Piccolo.

AC

Paint not perfect

EGS Paint, the 24-bit art package bundled free with this board, is an excellent complementary program, but it still has a way to go to catch up with the likes of TVPaint EGS and falls a little short of the Pico Painter package supplied with Piccolo.

The standard drawing tools are well catered for and there is an excellent bi- or quad-view setting so that users can work on up to four different parts of a large image, but the airbrush tool leaves a lot to be desired and there is no alpha channel. Working in 24-bit without the benefit of transparency control can be a little limiting to say the least.

Brush manipulation is at least good and there is support for all fonts, so the picture isn't all bad. In addition, EGS Paint works incredibly smoothly, and simply by using the scroll bars on the image window one can scroll through a 1.5Mb 24-bit image as if it were nothing – a testament to the power of Spectrum's blitter and its fast VRAM.

BACKGROUND

Stencils are also well implemented, and any brush can be used to mask the background image, so the package does have its uses. A good gradient fill tool is one thing EGS Paint can boast which Pico Painter lacks, and for 24-bit backdrops it is an essential effect.

A more advanced tool is the magic wand which will mark out an area or marquee whose boundaries are set by the user depending on colour tolerance. Using Magic wand all sorts of tricks can be utilised, including very selective fills, and its inclusion is a major boost to the package's flexibility.

The program's best feature, though, has to be its Pantograph tool, a strangely named beast which copies pixels from one part of an image to another area or a different image window using the current drawing tool.

This offers a great deal of flexibility and it is possible using Pantograph and the airbrush, for example, to create feathered brushes in another image, then paste them back into the original.



Pantograph and the magic wand tool give EGS Paint's flexibility a much needed boost

EP SOFTWARE

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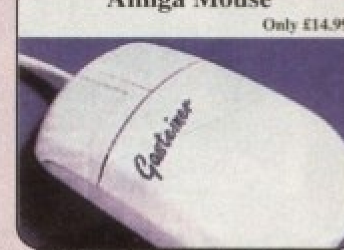
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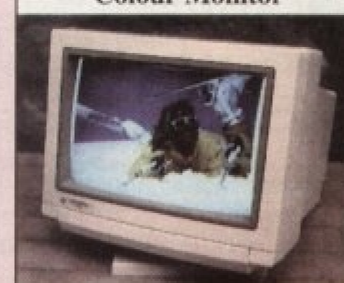
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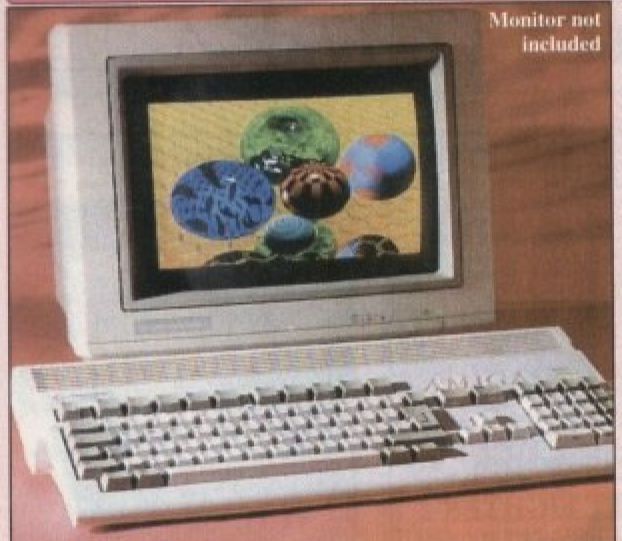
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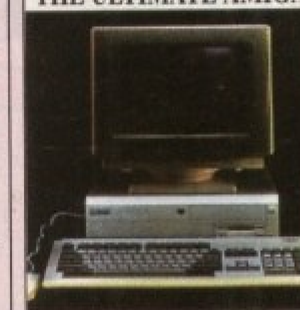
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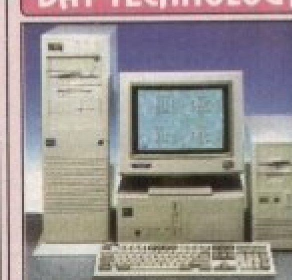


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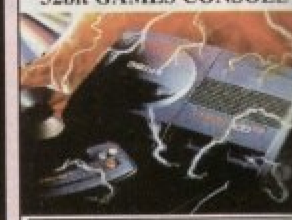
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What is a formatted disk?

Adam Phillips delves into the mysterious process known as formatting your floppies

At last! The computer has been used constructively – no more guilty feelings of spending a fair sized amount of money on just a games machine, and no more lingering worries about that large essay begging to be typed up. It's been done and is ready to be printed.

Ah, the only problem being that you have no printer at the moment... that's next on the buying list but for the time being, using your friend's Amiga printer set up over the other side of town will have to do.

The idea of having to take the whole 1200 across Bursley seems a little cumbersome especially by bus so the next best thing appears to be to copy the whole darn file across to floppy disk and take that across on the No 36.

The only obstacle lying in the way of feeling a wad of crisp, shiny paper covered with your words is the lack of a formatted disk. Or more to the point, what is a formatted disk anyway?

BLANK

When you buy a disk from a shop, it is usually completely blank and therefore can be used on any machine from a Commodore to a PC or Macintosh. In this state, nothing can be saved onto it simply because the micro won't be able to read it.

To be specifically set up to run on your Amiga, the diskette needs to be formatted by the computer so that it becomes recognisable to your 1200 which in turn means that files can then be loaded and saved onto the disk.

To achieve this, take your recently purchased floppy and take a look at the underside. In the top left corner, you'll see a black tab that can be moved up and down. This alters the protection of the disk – when it doesn't cover the hole, the disk cannot be written on to by the computer (write protected) and when over the hole, it is write enabled.

It's much like an audio cassette, but adjustable. Flick the tab over the hole and slip it into the switched on, Workbench booted 1200 floppy drive. An icon in the shape of a disk will appear displaying a series of question marks with the words DF0, PC0 or "DF0: NDOS".

The first two can appear simultaneously giving the user the option to select either a PC (PC0) or an Amiga-formatted disk (DF0). Don't worry about the PC option for now – from here you're ready to begin the formatting process.

Click on the DF0 disk icon once with the left-hand mouse button to highlight it, then press and hold down the right-hand one and you'll notice that the menu bar at the top of the screen displays various words with in it.

Move the pointer to this bar, holding the button all the while, and go over to the word Icons . This will produce a pull down menu of options.

Near the bottom, you'll notice Format Disks . Move the pointer over to it and it'll become highlighted. Release the right-hand button and the option will then be selected.

You'll be presented with a Format Selection window with various options. Current information gives you a rundown of the amount of memory and the name of the disk inserted in the floppy drive. It's possible to format your hard drive from here as well but leave that well alone for now.

FAST FILE

Look down the list and you'll see two very useful functions that can be clicked on or off. For an extra 40k of floppy memory which allows more data to be saved onto the disk, select the fast file system.

This feature is very useful but will only operate on Workbench 2 and above so check if you're going to have to use someone else's Amiga at some stage that they have the version required. Your 1200 comes with Workbench 3, the latest edition.

Directory cacheing speeds up the opening of drawers, file requestings and listings which is very useful for hunting through many files on one disk because there's less waiting involved. Unfortunately, it can only be run on v3 of Workbench so again check if you are going to be using it on somebody else's machine.

After selecting what you want, choose either Format or Quick format. Format erases everything on the disk which is constructed out of a series of cylinders that are numbered from 0 through to 79. The computer systematically goes through each one, wiping it of all information.

Quick format is used on disks that have already been correctly formatted for the Amiga and is simply there for the user to quickly set up a fresh floppy for files to be transferred on to by making the previous information stored unwrite protected and undetectable by the computer.

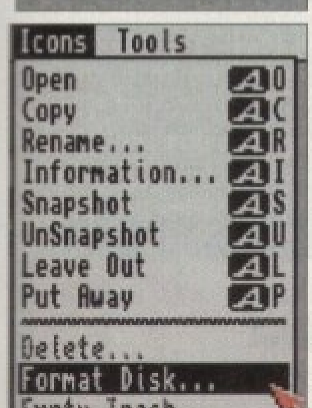
For your initial purposes, click on format and you'll be presented with a format request window which will then ask if you're absolutely sure that you want to wipe the current volume (disk).

Pressing on format produces a percentage window which slowly fills in as the disk is formatted. This can be stopped at any point by clicking on, yes, you've guessed it, stop.

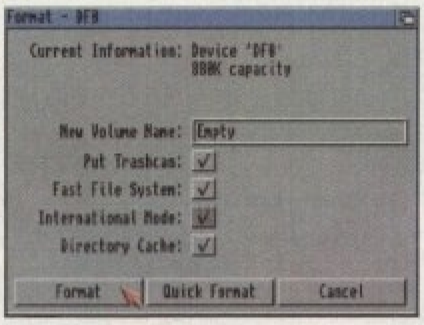
Once the micro has finished, the screen will revert back to the Workbench displaying the disk with it's new name, ready to be used at your leisure.



Click on the disk icon once to highlight it...



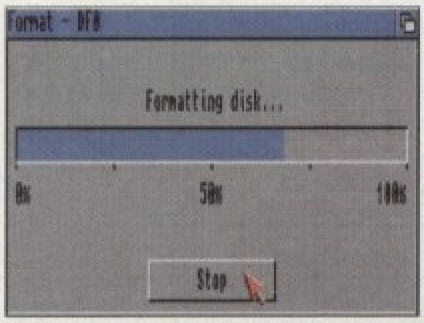
Select which special system features you want...



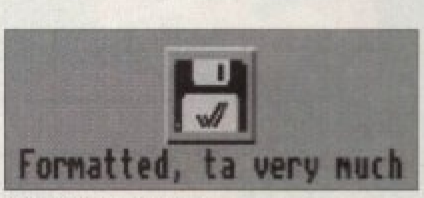
Select Format Disk



The final warning



The whole process takes a couple of minutes...



The final formatted disk

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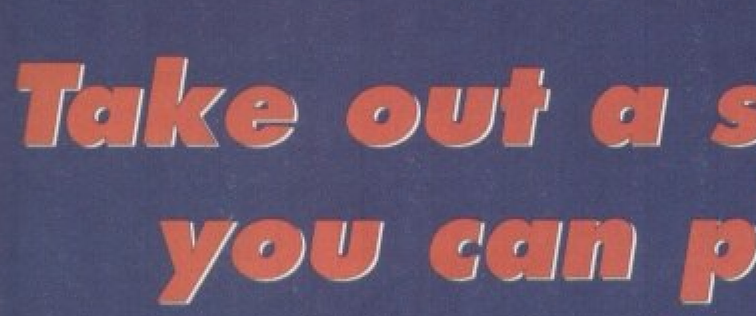
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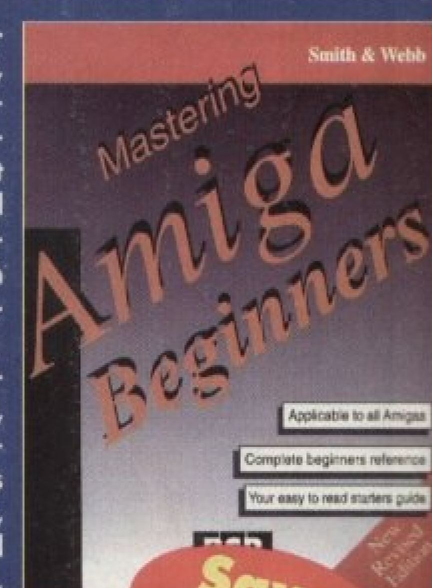


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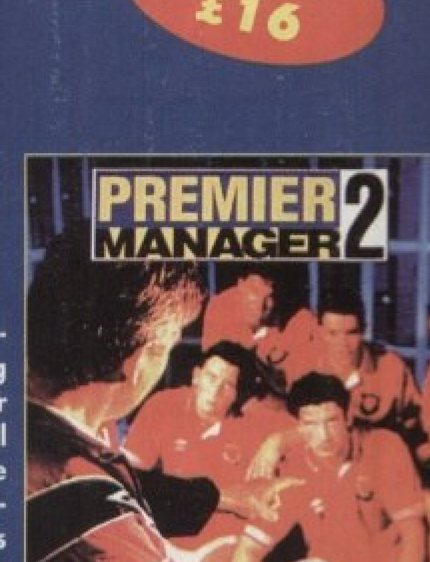
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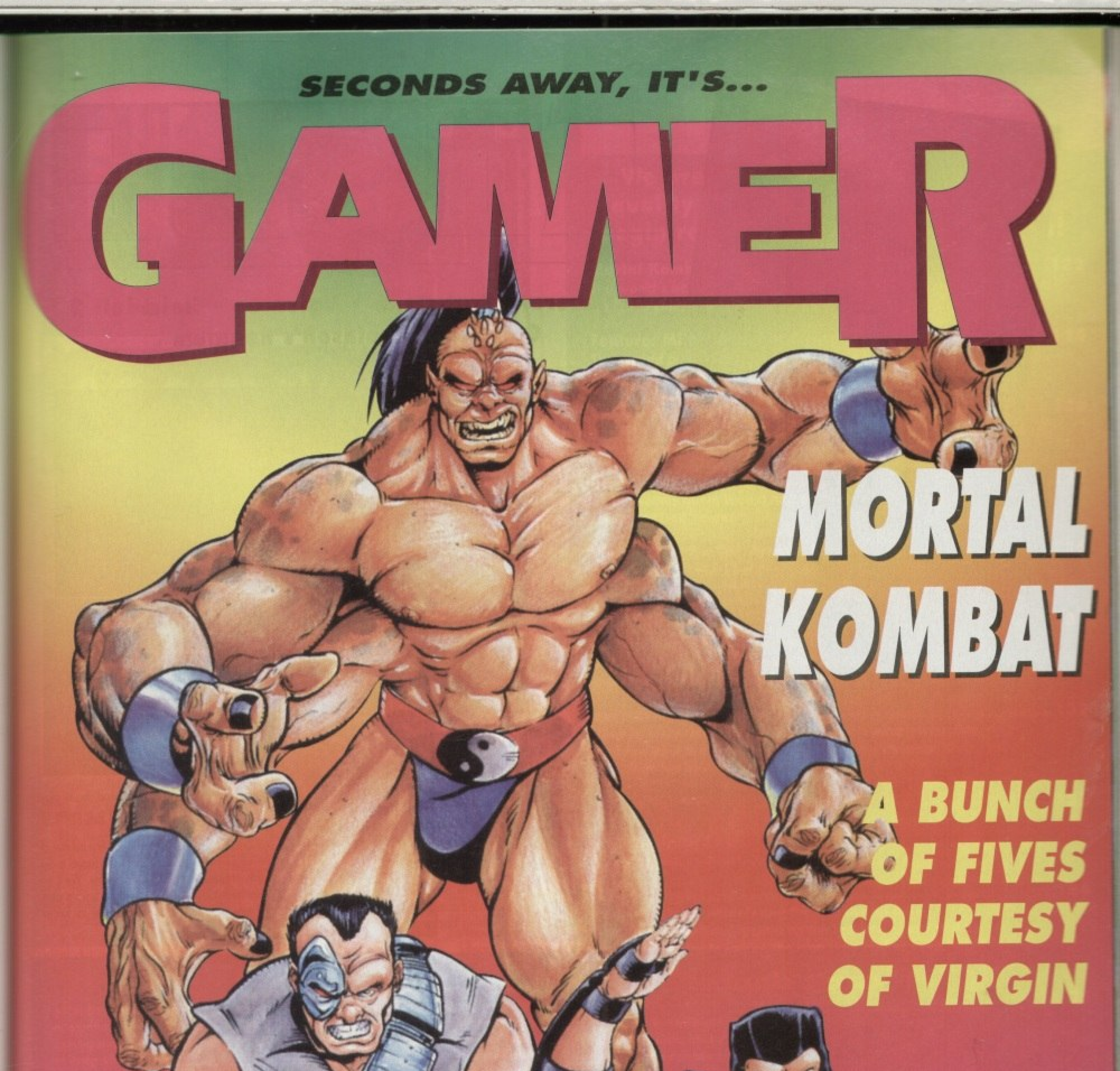
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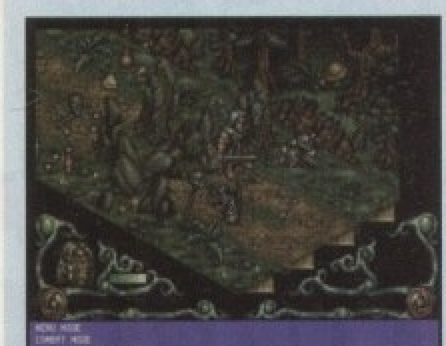
Gamer GLOBE

Darkmere • Darkstone • Universe • Heimdall 2
Genesia • Robinson's Requiem



Darkmere

Core-nucopia!



Yes indeed, cornucopia is the word because Core Design have got a wealth of releases coming your way. Following the success of Bubba 'n' Stix, the Derby based software house have got a further four titles to be released before April.

First up is the long-awaited Darkmere which has been in development longer than the new Stone Roses album. In this 3D isometric RPG you play the role of Ebryn.

Ebryn's father, Gildorn, many years ago went to help the people of Darkmere who were being terrorised. The only problem is that Gildorn is an Elf and it is and I quote the Elven Council " Tnot our place to interfere with affairs of humans".

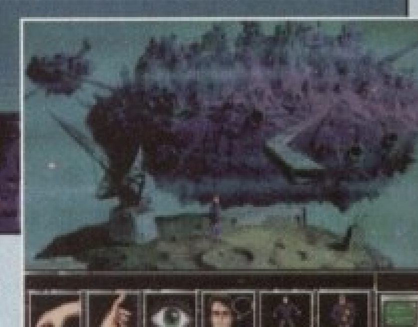
Gildorn revolted against the Council and took his sword and magic crystal to complete his quest of saving the humans. Gildorn returned to the village and stayed there and became old and weak. His son, Ebryn, grew strong and became a brave fighter. Evil was also on the up and just like his father before him, Ebryn decides to become heir to the throne by ridding Darkmere of evil.

Sounds pretty damn good and it should be on the shelves as you read this, but expect a full review next month. With all the development problems a strange occurrence has arisen. The sequel to Darkmere entitled Darkstone will be available to buy in February, just a month later than the original!

Darkstone will be a top-down Medieval RPG adventure and if it's anything like what we've seen of Darkmere it should be pretty good.

Coming to your monitor screen in February is Universe, a graphic adventure very similar in style to Curse of Enchantia. Universe follows a similar format to Curse in that it uses a point and click, icon-driven adventure game, but this time with added text.

The story revolves around the plight of an ordinary lad who finds himself dragged into another dimension. After tampering with his eccentric Uncle's mechanical invention, the "Virtual Dimension Inducer", our young hero arrives in a futuristic parallel universe and so his adventure begins.

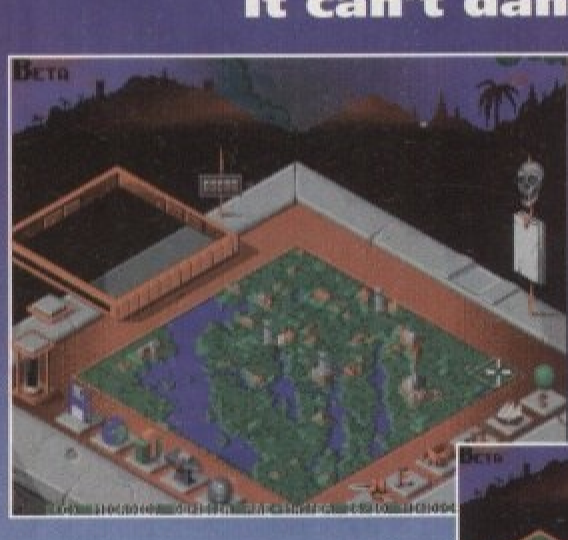
Universe

The game features 3D rendered animations and arcade style sequences as well as an innovative S.P.A.C. 256 colour system which runs on all Amiga formats including the A500.

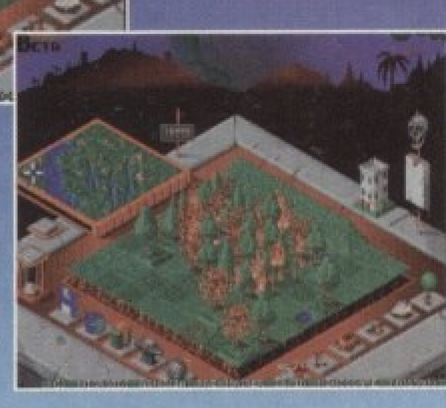
Err, I don't actually know exactly what it is, but apparently it is able to display Universe's digitised hand painted scenes and their detailed, mood-setting background animations to full effect. Universe looks damn sexy and should play like a dream and hopefully we'll a preview or review in the next issue.

Core Design's last release in the first quarter of '94 will be Heimdall 2, the emphatic sequel to the highly praised Nordic RPG adventure. We'll no doubt be sneaking down to Derby to have a peek at it very soon, so keep reading Gamer for further developments.

It can't dance!

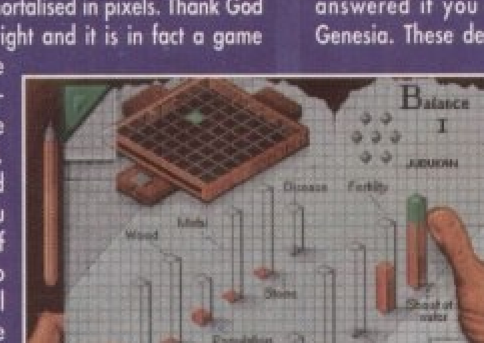


The world of Genesia where youcan create and control your destiny.



Similar in style to populous, but Genesia is looking good and is coming your way in '94

Genesia. A disastrous spelling mistake could mean that Phil Collins and his friends are about to be immortalised in pixels. Thank God I have spelt it right and it is in fact a game from Mindscape that's been heralded as the new Civilization.



In the world of Genesia you play the part of a leader who owns a small land. You are also a power-crazed fool and your land is just far too small for your ambitions.

You must expand your land and populace in tune with nature, paying attention to the climate and managing resources such as water and timber (hey, it's eco-friendly. Right on!).

At the same time you are dependent on the skills of your people. Are they a race of hunters or farmers; do you have architects and inventors among them? Are your people happy or are they insular, miserable and unfriendly?

Questions such as this will need to be answered if you are to get anywhere in Genesia. These decisions and consequences will effect the game so you will have to work, invent, defend, build, fight, trade, destroy and conquer to stay at the top.

Genesia is an overwhelming combination of the best in strategy and God games and features five different worlds each requiring different strategies and play styles to win.

The four seasons are graphically represented and have a real-life effect on the game. Mindscape's latest offering features some highly detailed isometric graphics and context-linked sounds to create an intense atmosphere.

The price is still yet to be confirmed, but Genesia will arrive in the early part of 1994.



I will survive!

Silmarils, the company that brought you the Ishar series of adventures, have returned with Robinson's Requiem – is apparently the ultimate test of human endurance in an alien world.

You play government agent Robinson, sent on a reconnaissance mission to a mysterious and unknown planet. However, you soon discover that the entire mission is a trap set by your own government, who for their own reasons no longer want you around!

Your ship is out of control and is being helplessly dragged to what is in fact an enormous prison – an "astral Alcatraz" from which no-one has ever escaped.

You decide to bail out of your ship and land in the heart of a dense and hostile jungle. Equipped only with a survival kit which contains many medicines and tools plus a micro-computer to keep you informed of your physiological condition.

The aim of the game is to escape and the name of the game is self-preservation. If you have to amputate one of your own limbs in order to survive, then that is what you must do! (Crikey! – Ed)

Along your travels you will meet many monsters and extra-terrestrials who can be used for food and clothing, from which the only drawback is the fact they will eat you.

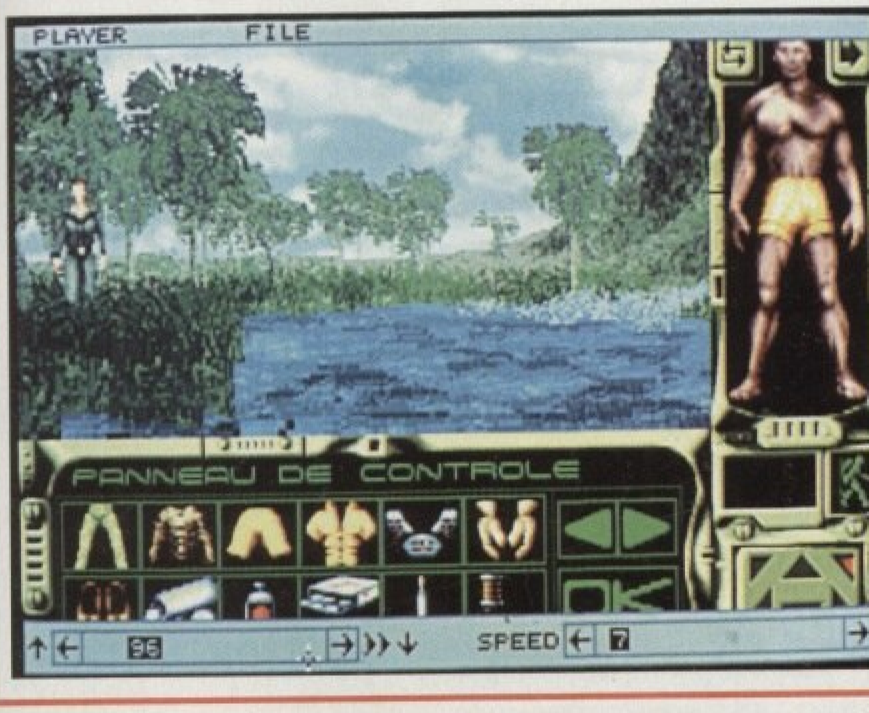
Robinson's Requiem has a spectacular play area representing over 3 square miles and includes ten different sceneries such as underground passages, lunar volcanoes and even a graveyard.



That fantastic first ever shot of Ishar 3

The graphics are absolutely amazing and it looks like Robinson's Requiem could be that little bit special. You'll have to wait until March when it is released to find out, but we should have an in-depth preview in the near future.

Silmarils are also on the verge of completing Ishar 3 and as you can see from the screenshot it looks like more of the same, but, err, probably better. Ishar 3 is to be released in April, but we'll provide you with more information as soon as we get it.



INNARDS

We are absolutely bulging with top quality game reviews this month. I'd begin reading them now if I were you!

MORTAL KOMBAT

Fighting for the title of best beat-'em-up on the Amiga, Virgin's arcade conversion makes it to the small screen

You've seen the adverts of the TV with that long-haired bloke shouting "Mooooortal Kombaaaat" backed up with loads of "hip" streetwise kids who are dancing and jumping to a hardcore dance tune.

Of course you have, this advertisement was for the Mega Drive and SNES versions and I have to hold my hands up and say that Mortal Kombat looked absolutely brilliant!

Those pesky console owners seem to always go one better, but no longer because courtesy of Virgin and Probe Software (the team that converted Terminator 2 to the Amiga), Mortal Kombat is putting an appearance in on the Amiga. Oh yes!

As far as beat-'em-ups go the 16-bit home computers have done relatively well with titles such as IK+, Body Blows, Body Blows Galactic and even Street Fighter 2 – although that wasn't very good, but still a lot of punters out there bought it.

Everybody loves a great beat 'em-up and I know the reason why. For one, when you're frustrated or angry you can't go up to someone in the street and smack them in the face. Err well you can, but you'll get sent to prison on GBH charges.

Thus via today's game technology you can be transported into the body of a muscle-bound freak and kick the living daylights out of your opponents. This is perhaps even more satisfying when you're playing against a friend or enemy.

You actually become the fighter and sometimes it does actually feel as though you're getting your head kicked in, although it's more mental than physical obviously.

DIFFERENT

The slight problem with beat-'em-ups is the fact that once you've seen one you've seen them all, because you are so limited to what you can do in them. This is where Mortal Kombat has the advantage of being slightly different.

Apart from being hyped to oblivion, Mortal Kombat is perhaps the bloodiest, most goriest fighting game that you're ever likely to see. For those well up on the console scene the you will know that the SNES version didn't have any blood in it whatsoever and the Mega Drive's bloodfest could only be accessed via a cheat.

The Amiga version, just like the arcade, get the full treatment with oodles of blood and gore splattering all over the place. Yes, sick I know and it'll probably turn us into a nation of serial killers, but Mortal Kombat is the bloodiest game I've played since Moonstone.

It's a tournament whereupon fighters are chosen from around and out of this world to scrap it out to the death. You have to choose between seven characters who all have distinct personalities and abilities.

In a sort of handy "thanks a lot Gamer" kinda way, all these characters details are displayed on this page. I said seven before, but you will notice that there are actually nine characters in what we lovingly call a "box out".

You have to fight the other two at the end of the game after you've defeated the other characters. First you have to battle the monstrous Goro who has six arms and a very bad attitude and then to win you have to take on the might of Shang Tsung.

As you may or may not know, to win a bout you have to deplete your opponent's energy bar to zero. The bouts are fought on a best-to-three basis and at the end of your second victory your defeated victim will stand swaying for a few seconds and Shang Tsung screams "Finish him!".

FREE SHOT

You'll then get a free shot at them to complete your victory, but this gives you the chance to perform your lethal death move to make your fighting performance even better.

The death move involves all manner of grisly deaths and range from exploding heads to hearts being ripped out of bodies. Gory I know, but hey the "kids" love it, apparently.

Summing up, Mortal Kombat is one of the best beat-'em-ups that you can buy for the Amiga. It kicks seven shades out of the almost laughable Street Fighter 2.

It will be compared and placed against Body Blows Galactic and it would be too hard to say which one is better because they both have their advantages and disadvantages. I guess at the end of the day it's all a question of taste.

Mortal Kombat does contain digitised graphics straight from the arcade machine and this technique has been used before in games like Pit Fighter, but unfortunately it didn't work too well.

For some bizarre reason it actually works in Mortal Kombat. The digitised static screens aren't brilliant and if you pause the game and look at the character sprites they aren't too hot either.

When Mortal Kombat is in motion of and you're in the thick of the action, though, all this is forgotten. There are plenty of nice backgrounds and once again the blood does look really good when you're smacking someone in the face.

I know on paper it sounds really naff, but when you've got control of the stick and you're beating your way up the ladder it is absolutely brilliant. On the sound front the music is fairly good, but nothing really outstanding. The effects though are good, especially the digitised speech, and you'll find yourself repeating the "catchphrases".

AMAZED

The major difference between Mortal Kombat and its lacklustre competitor Street Fighter 2 is the fact that Virgin's beat-'em-up is that much more playable. To be honest I'm amazed how they converted all the game's moves onto just one joystick.

For instance, the console versions have the distinct advantage of having loads of buttons on the joypad controllers, but the Amiga joystick just has eight directions and one Fire button.

It does take you a while to get to know each character's moves and perform them correctly, but once you've overcome this little problem you can enter beat-'em-up heaven.

Mortal Kombat is a very good one-player game, but as per usual it's always more fun with a chum. Most people will be able to complete the game on easy level within a day, but there are still a further three levels to try your hand at.

Probe Software have done a sterling job converting the arcade smash to the small screen and I doff my cap to them. If you want a beat-'em up to go along with your copy of Body Blows Galactic then this is it. Buy Mortal Kombat, it's bloody good fun... literally.

JONATHAN MADDOCK

GAMER GOLD



Vital Kombat Statistics

Goro, the four-armed beastie from the pits of hell, but a really nice chap once you get to know him!



Name: Liu Kang
Age: 24
Height: 5'10"
Weight: 185lbs
Origin: China
Occupation: Shaolin Monk



Name: Kano
Age: 35
Height: 6'
Weight: 205lbs
Origin: Unknown
Occupation: Criminal



Name: Rayden
Age: Immortal
Height: 7'
Weight: 350lbs
Origin: The Universal Planes of Being
Occupation: Deity



Name: Sub-Zero
Age: 32
Height: 6'2"
Weight: 210lbs
Origin: China
Occupation: Lin Kuei Ninja Assassin



Name: Johnny Cage
Age: 29
Height: 6'1"
Weight: 200lbs
Origin: USA
Occupation: Actor



Name: Scorpion
Age: 32
Height: 6'2"
Weight: 210lbs
Origin: Hades
Occupation: Unknown



Name: Sonya Blade
Age: 26
Height: 5'10"
Weight: 140lbs
Origin: USA
Occupation: Task Force Lt.



Name: Shang Tsung
Age: Unknown
Height: 6'2"
Weight: 210lbs
Origin: China
Occupation: Machiavellian



Name: Goro
Age: 2000
Height: 8'2"
Weight: 550lbs
Origin: Outworld
Occupation: Prince and ruler



Which one of these muscle bound heroes will you choose to help scrap your way through level upon level of beat-'em-up fun?



Wahey it's a gorefest! Liu Kang suffers from an extremely bad nose bleed which comes courtesy of Sub-Zero's fist



Sonya and her fire-breath. Has the woman ever heard of mouth-wash?



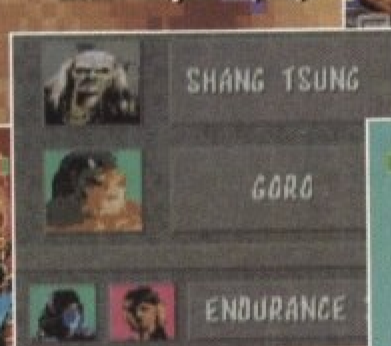
Sub-zero sees double in the mirror-match fight



Test your might by breaking a block of wood in two or should that be test your stupidity?



Kano gets encased in ice via a blast from the Ice King himself, Sub-Zero



Mortal Kombat a game where competitors are literally sent flying. Oh yes



VISION – 9/10

AUDIO – 8/10

DIFFICULTY – 9/10

LASTABILITY – 8/10

Mortal Kombat rivals Team 17's Body Blows in looks, sound and style. It's playable. It's addictive. It's worth every penny. Buy it or be forever sad!

91%

Publisher ➤	Virgin
Developer ➤	Probe Software
Disks ➤	2
Price ➤	£29.99
HD Install ➤	No
Size ➤	1Mb





In this the second and final part of our insight into top software house Millennium Interactive, we talk to games gurus Ian Saunter and Marcus Broom about the concepts and development of forth-coming attractions Mister Magoo and Small Furry Creatures (working title)



PART 2

INTO THE NEXT MILLENNIUM

Marcus Broom – pixel artist

GAMER *What advantages does Mister Magoo have over other TV/film licences?*

Magoo is a well loved character known by millions of people world wide and his slapstick comedy is enjoyed by audiences of all ages.

GAMER *What methods do you employ when designing the game?*

It's like going back to play school – we cut out objects from bits of paper and create bizarre events from them, and we try to connect the events together to make our map. It is very stressful but at the same time it's extremely good fun.

GAMER *How hard is it to keep coming up with fresh ideas for games?*

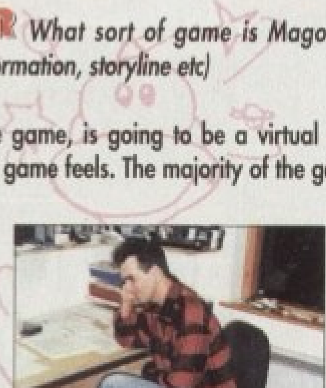
It's not hard at all, there are so many possibilities and variants.

GAMER *Does the fact that the Magoo character has already been created make your job harder or easier?*

It has its advantages and disadvantages. We don't have to create a popular character as Magoo has a very large popularity factor. His personality though restricts us a great deal and we have had to put a lot of time and effort into the design of the game.

GAMER *What sort of game is Magoo? (ie background information, storyline etc)*

Magoo, the game, is going to be a virtual cartoon with two distinct game feels. The majority of the game will give the player control over the interactive cartoon where anything is possible. Dotted throughout the game however are a number of arcade type sequences where the player takes indirect control over Magoo. The overall theme is of chaos and mayhem at the player's control.



"Magoo, the game, is going to be a virtual cartoon with two distinct game feels. The majority of the game will give the player control over the interactive cartoon where anything is possible."

– Marcus Broom, pixel artist

GAMER *Will you be able to take advantage of the existing Magoo cartoons and incorporate elements of them into the game? (ie graphics, music and sound FX)*

Yes we will take full advantage or the original Magoo footage, so for example, we can find out how Magoo may act in certain situations or what his basic characteristic poses are and use them as a base for our graphics and add more detail.

GAMER *Magoo is Millennium's first licensed game. What other licences would you like to see?*

Personally I would love to work with Hanna Barbera, ie *Wacky Races*, *Scooby Doo*, or Warner Brothers/Disney.

GAMER *What are the levels going to be like?*

There are going to be six areas which in turn are split into two sub areas. There is a substantial difference in gameplay between them. All the levels will be entertaining and some will be positively chaotic!

Ian Saunter • development director

GAMER *Explain the concept behind Small Furry Creatures...*

You'll take the part of a spirit guide, responsible for a pair of friendly creatures as they make their way around their world on a mysterious quest.

These creatures are trainable, like a pet or a young child, having their own "brains" – so whether they succeed or fail depend largely on the relationship you are able to teach them, as well as the natural perils of their world.

GAMER *How did you come up with the idea for SFC?*

We were originally influenced by Activision's Little Computer People product from a few years ago, but we wanted to progress the idea of an independent world in the machine to much greater heights than was possible in the 8-bit days.

So we have more than one intelligent creature, a whole world for them to explore and a game running along in the background in order to keep the user actively involved in what's going on.

Steve Grand (the games programmer) has had a long-standing ambition to create artificial life and this is our chance to make it happen.

GAMER *The work that you're going to do in SFC sounds quite revolutionary. How will the use of artificial intelligence change computer games?*

Game technology in its broadest sense has come along way since TV tennis and we now have the capability to create convincing virtual worlds inside affordable machines (even if there's no processing power left to do anything else).

What hasn't yet made much progress though is the technology that will allow us to populate those worlds and without that virtual reality is rather sterile and literally lifeless. This game is nothing more than a first step but I hope that it leads to some useful technology for the future.

The other area where this work has an impact is the "computer player". Every programmer of strategy games has at some time discovered how difficult it is to tell a computer how to play a game convincingly against a human being.

I don't mean games like chess, but strategy games, war games and role-playing adventures where the rules are complex and hard to pin down and no strategies exist.

Give these games a real intelligence, though, and the problem becomes much be easier: All the programmer has to do is keep playing the game and let the neural net watch and learn. You might not know why it does what it does but you can keep teaching until it gets it right.

An added bonus of this approach is that the computer player is still alive when the user takes it out of the box and it can continue to learn and adapt itself to the individual user's tactics.

GAMER *Because of the use of AI, what will the gamesplayer actually be responsible for?*

The players will be acting in loco parentis for an orphaned pair of these creatures and will accompany them on their travels around a strange world, helping and nurturing them (or being unnecessarily cruel and hurtful, if they must, though I hope they feel bad about it afterwards).
But the AI is only a means to an end; besides having brains these creatures have a past, a present and presumably, a future. A large part of the fun I hope lies in exploring the world itself and finding out about its technology, art, music, history, literature, and other lifeforms just for the hell of it.

GAMER *Explain in more detail about AI/neural-nets and how they will work in a computer game.*

That's a bit of a tall order in a magazine article! I could happily write a book on the subject. The basic principle behind neural nets is that instead of trying vainly to make computers intelligent in themselves we use the computer to do what computers are really good at which is simulating things.

With neural nets, we attempt to simulate the behaviour of a large mass of neurones on the understanding that collections of neurones already "know" how to be intelligent and we can gain access to this power merely by asking the computer to pretend it's a bundle of nerve cells.

The only slight snag about all this is that neurones are actually extremely complicated structures wired up in mind boggling complex ways and we don't really know what properties of neurones or their wiring are important nor even what the brain's wiring diagram looks like!



> *"Game technology in its broadest sense has come along way since TV Tennis and we now have the capability to create convincing virtual worlds inside affordable machines."*
>
> *– Ian Saunter, development director*

Despite that there has been real progress using neural net technology in the field of pattern recognition and some useful theory has been developed.

Unfortunately, most of this theory only applies in cases where you can establish how near the network has got to the right answer so that you can apply a correction and thus let the network "learn".

What I'm interested in is simulating real living creatures in a real, noisy environment where there are no right answers. For this, I've had to develop some new theories of my own and if you think I'm going to tell you what they are, then dream on!

GAMER *AI being of such a serious subject, what kind of look and feel will the game generate? Will it appeal to youngsters as well as older gamesplayers?*

AI is a pretty weighty subject, but that's my worry, not the users. I have no intention of letting any of this spoil the game. What I am aiming to do is create a group of living creatures with the mentality of a two-year-old and the general personality of a mixed-up puppy.

All I want to the user to see is a lively and interesting living thing, which responds to him or her, can be taught things, learns about the world around it and generally becomes part of the family.

Unlike a dog, these creatures are capable of understanding and using words so the player can teach them a simple language (any language) and ask them to do things.

For those players that find the AI stuff interesting enough in itself the game world contains a hospital where PET scanners, EEGs drugs and other tools are available for him to explore and experiment with.

This kind of thing will appeal more to the older player, but I hope that anyone who would enjoy owning a domestic pet will equally enjoy this game (not least because you don't have to take it for walks).

GAMER *How hard is it to come up with new ideas for original products?*

It's not that hard to come up with new ideas many of your readers will have experienced a wave of excitement about some game idea they've had. The hard part is turning the idea into a product, which involves a combination of technical and artistic skills as well as money.

Unfortunately, even a great idea won't be done justice unless it is also conceived against a background of what makes commercial sense. That's why we have to reject far more game ideas than we actually go on to publish.

GAMER *Where do these ideas come from? What influences you?*

Speaking for myself, they usually emerge from conversation with friends or colleagues. I have had ideas lying in bed with flu, in the car and staring into space, but these are the exception. At the end of the day getting ideas to work as games to work relies on letting go of "owning" the idea, and the collaborative effort of others.

GAMER *Now that you've got a full-time art department what will the graphics be like in SFC?*

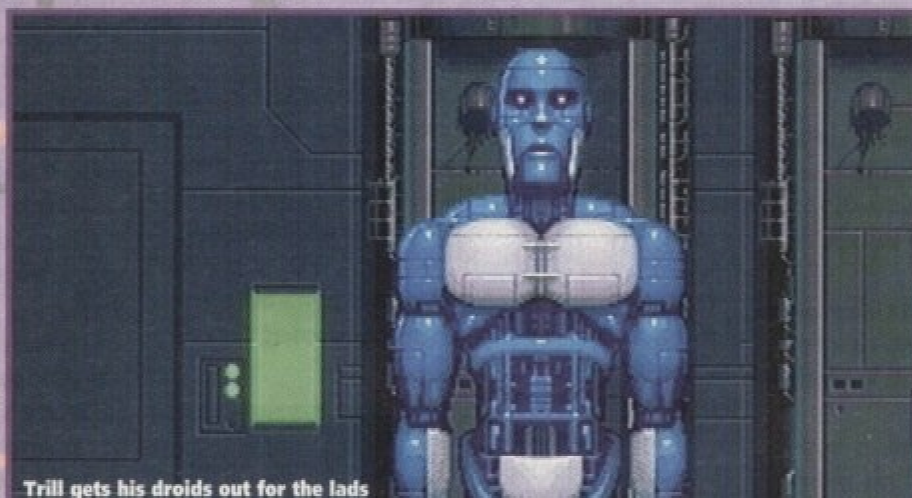
Exceptionally brilliant!

GAMER *What will computer games be like in the future?*

Bigger, better, faster, cleverer, prettier... er, ask me again in a few years.

LIBERATION

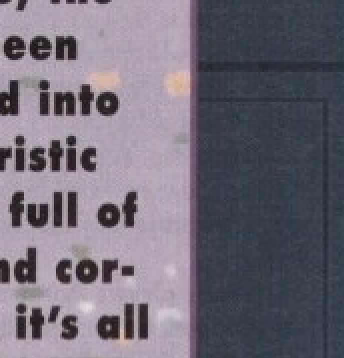
Coo lummie, the world's been transformed into some futuristic place that's full of vice, evil and corruption, and it's all been done without the Tory party



Trill gets his droids out for the lads

Occasionally in life, something happens which is so big that it throws you into a state of temporary dementia and paralysis, and you are unable to carry on in the normal manner.

Since I got my grubby mitts on Liberation I have been in one of the aforementioned states. Friends have been cast aside, lovers spurned (well, she hasn't, but it makes for a more dramatic intro) and work has fallen down the back of the grille, next to something called the backburner.



For once in this reviewer's life, he has found himself absorbed and interested in a new release. At long last a software house has released a title that feels like it has been built and designed solely for the CD32.

It's about time as well – so far all we've had to look at are a few port-overs from the A1200 and the odd souped-up back catalogue title.

Admittedly Diggers was worthy in showing the machine's capabilities off to some degree, but not since the launch have we seen anything capable of living up to any of the hype that has been syringed into the earlobe at regular intervals. That was of course until Captive 2 came along.

Interestingly enough, when the development started on Liberation it was a floppy project. When programmer Tony Lazzerini heard that Commodore were going to unleash (is this an apt description for Commodore's go-get-'em marketing strategy?) the first 32-bit CD-based console on the world, he decided that the machine would be the ideal tool for his latest project.

So, unlike the majority of CD32 software to date, which relies on jazzy intros and link animations to make up for spartan gameplay, Liberation can offer both stunning graphics and involving gameplay.

Usually at this point of a review, we say something about booting up, or inserting disks into drives. So, it's a very refreshing feeling to tell you about dropping nice, silvery, lightweight compact discs onto CD trays.

The introduction to Liberation is worth paying for alone. I hasten to add that it's not the full-motion video affair that the machine is capable of. But, it's about five minutes long, very neatly animated and leaves you really wanting to get into the play.

The story picks up from where Captive left off. Our hero Trill, having used his four droids to escape from the penal colony following his wrongful conviction, is adjusting to life in the 27th Century.

One day Trill is watching News at Ten, and happens to come across a particularly disturbing story. Being the enquiring type who obviously has scant regard for his own life and freedom, he decides to once more push his snout in where it could get stung.

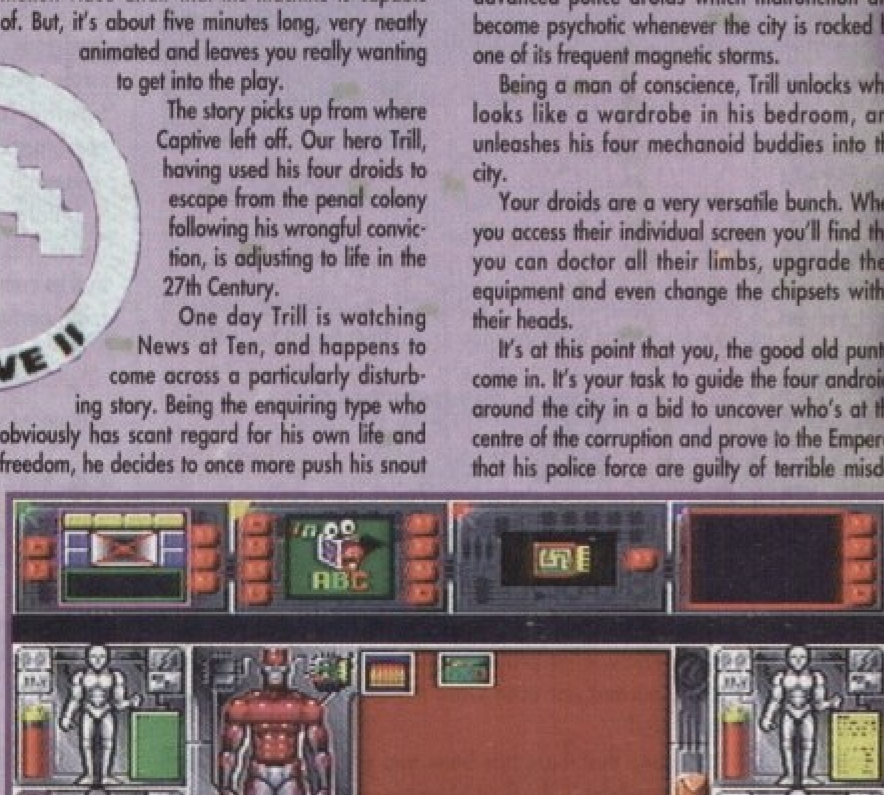
The outcome of his snooping is that Trill uncovers a major scandal involving thousands of other people who have been wrongfully arrested for murders they didn't commit.

The true perpetrators of these crimes are advanced police droids which malfunction and become psychotic whenever the city is rocked by one of its frequent magnetic storms.

Being a man of conscience, Trill unlocks what looks like a wardrobe in his bedroom, and unleashes his four mechanoid buddies into the city.

Your droids are a very versatile bunch. When you access their individual screen you'll find that you can doctor all their limbs, upgrade their equipment and even change the chipsets within their heads.

It's at this point that you, the good old punter come in. It's your task to guide the four androids around the city in a bid to uncover who's at the centre of the corruption and prove to the Emperor that his police force are guilty of terrible misde-



Typical British Telecom, get to a call box and it's out of order





Look right, look left, look right and look left again. gosh it's fun in the Tufty Club



Me... I'm a homicidal cop killer

meanours – sounds just like real life.

To make the world of the 27th Century a better place to live in, you must journey around the city interrogating the populace and gaining evidence to back up your case.

Now, this sounds so far like many other RPG style titles, with your characters wandering around a massively dull environment where nothing ever changes.

Not so in Liberation. Here all of the characters you interact with have variable personalities. Which means you might happen upon them on one mission and they be a miserable blighter, and then the next time be extremely helpful (just like shopkeepers, huh, folks?).

Also, throughout your travels random events will occur, so many in fact, that even the programmers don't know exactly what will happen next. Everyday life continues around you as you drop into the plot.

Don't get to involved though, because normal life includes a city that's brimming with vehicles. All of which don't seem to pay much attention to pedestrians and take great delight in running you down.

So what you have to all intents and purposes is a fully functioning simulated city, where you can wander wherever you want to your heart's content – or until you've completed one of the 4,000 (yes, four with three zeros) missions.

Many of the ideas that make up this city and the play seem inspired by things like *Neuromancer* and *Bladerunner*. For example, far below the high-tech bustle of the cities upper levels lies a vast subterranean underworld packed full of some spuriously dodgy characters.

Here, you'll be able to buy extra pieces of equipment and some of the 50 weapons that are featured in Liberation. Graphically, Liberation's got some of the best graphics yet seen in an adventure title.

All of the many locations are texture mapped and still scroll pretty smoothly. One nice touch with the graphics is the way you can look up and down at objects, and this too scrolls fairly nicely.

Much has been said about the control paddle of Commodore's console, most of which has been fairly derogatory. It has to be said that it takes some time to come to terms with the control in Liberation.

This isn't particularly to do with the much maligned paddle however, but has more to do with the fact that Captive 2 uses a fairly complicated control method because of the number of options available to you.

In the sound department, Liberation handles itself very adequately. It features a very rousing tune throughout play, which is delivered to you in high quality CD stereo.

The game also features a fair amount of sampled speech, which due to CD is very concise and clear.



In Liberation you can gaze up at the clouds if you care to

Overall, Liberation is probably one of the most interesting and engrossing titles I've seen for quite a while. Once you master the control system you'll be hooked and unable to put your paddle down.

Its depth makes most other 3D adventures look like simple PD products. The main beauty of Liberation is that you can go anywhere and can complete the missions in a variety of ways.

Liberation is a breath of fresh air and will offer a much-needed lifeline to the CD32. It's high time something came along of Liberation's quality to show the CD32 off.

For those who don't yet own Commodore's console, this is the level of software which will persuade people that this is the machine for them. Nice one Mindscape.

SIMON CLAYS



Busy little shopping mall this, I wonder where Smiths is so I can buy a copy of *Amiga Computing?*

VISION GGGGGGGGG

AUDIO GGGGGGGG

DIFFICULTY GGGGGGGG

LASTABILITY GGGGGGGGG

91%

Gadzook! At last, a title solely developed for the CD32, and you can tell. Great graphics, smart sound and a depth of play seldom achieved in computer games. If you own a CD32 buy this game, if you don't yet, then Liberation's certainly one to put the proverbial cat amongst the metaphorical pigeons.

Publisher ➤ Mindscape
Developer ➤ In-house
Price ➤ £39.99

GAMER GOLD

CD32 game





Where's that chap with the helicopter? This is a Barratt Estate isn't it?



The maximum amount of information as to how your settlement is progressing

SETTLERS

Tum-ter-tum-tum-tum. No, it's not a remedy for indigestion, but Settlers could well be a cure for your boredom

Although the task of reviewing Settlers lay on my shoulders, it took a writer's fortnight (four days to those who don't over-exaggerate everything) to claw the disks out of various sweaty palms.

During the lead up to this review I've not heard so many monitors purring with sampled elation or seen so many gleeful faces of concentration reflected in engrossing screens.

Before I even booted Settlers up, I'd had various excited responses from the most unlikely of candidates. Great they said, attention to detail they said, intelligent they said, you've got to be kidding I frowned.

Now, right at this present second, you're probably gazing down at the page, while subconsciously looking at the screenshots, thinking hmm, another "I play God" type game.

Well to all intents and purposes, as usual dear reader you are correct. However, Settlers is more than an also-ran – it contains some of the most intelligent interactions between player and characters yet to be seen on an Amiga.

But what's it all about? I hear you scream from your fake leather armchair. Well, the main aim of Settlers is to build and run an organised, prosperous city and gain control of other enemy communities.

At first glance it doesn't seem a very complicated plot, but the reality is a very different kettle of fish. At its most rudimentary, Settlers is based on the good old-fashioned theory of supply and demand. However, there are many different aspects within



this simple-sounding equation which you must keep under tight control to be a successful leader.

For instance, one aspect of Settlers is to conquer enemy territories. To achieve this warmongering ambition you need a nice army of knights.

To keep these hardy warriors happy, they need to be motivated and armed. Well, to be armed they need weapons and to be sufficiently motivated to go out raping and pillaging on a Saturday morning they like large quantities of gold.

As you might expect, gold needs mining and weapons need to be forged from other mined materials. So, in order to extract these raw materials from the ground you need geologists to find the veins of various ores and a huge workforce to mine it out.

Now, hordes of workers have a hefty appetite between them, which means you must have a sufficient amount of food to keep the workforce with full bellies.

What all this is building up to say is that Settlers has a very complicated infrastructure within it. From the example above you can see quite a complicated chain system to keep one faction of your population contented.

As there are many factions and layers within these groups, you've got quite a task on your hands. Because of its complicated nature, Settlers comes equipped with a well documented manual and a number of tutorial missions.

SQUEAKY

Everything within Settlers is controlled by icons via your squeaky pal the mouse. At first these take some getting to grips with, but once you're conversant you'll soon be planning that Barratt estate.

The first job you've to decide upon is where to begin your settlement. This is done by moving your mouse and clicking on your left button, which displays an on-screen icon of the place you have selected to build on.

The next step is to check out the surrounding land to see if this potential estate has the raw materials to be prosperous. Once you've plumped for a particular location, then simply clicking on the build icon constructs your first palatial residence.

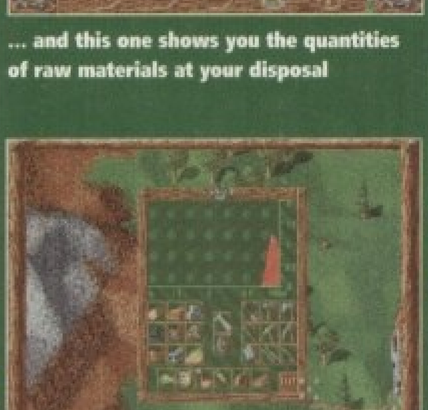
After this initial placement of your HQ, you can start building and the fun really starts. The economy of a successful settlement bases its foundations on sturdy grass roots. So in Settlers it's important for you to start building the correct type of production chain which will best utilise your raw materials.

For example, if your settlement has woodcutters but no forester, then the net result will be a chain breakdown. This will mean that after a duration because the forester has not planted saplings, the woodcutter will start running out of timber. The knock-on effect of this will be an eventual slump in the manufacture of buildings.

Something so simple in its essence could actually cause a breakdown for the whole of your settlement. So it's very important that you use your raw materials



... and this one shows you the quantities of raw materials at your disposal



...this chart displays the production rate of raw materials



A settlement is improved...



...by a good road network

GAMER GOLD

is to build the right balance within your community.

To aid you in this desperate bid to balance your resources, you are given a series of tables and statistics to gauge how your little fellows are getting along.

Within this section of settlers you can also alter the production of goods and the priorities in which they are generated.

All of this probably hasn't left you quaking with excitement, itching to get down to your gaming emporium and charging home with your copy of Settlers clasped tightly in your perspiring palm.

While Settlers won't grab you in print, rest assured after 20 minutes of playing you'll be absolutely engrossed. What could have been a grossly serious affair has been beautifully crafted by German software house Blue Byte.

CLEVER BLEND

They have managed to give Settlers a very clever blend of unique playability and cutesy humour which somehow combines to great effect.

Each Settler has a different style individual to his or his craft, so you can differentiate between each trade. As you scroll about your vibrant community, don't be surprised to see a butcher chopping up meat or a blacksmith forging tools while his chimney bellows out smoke from the hearth.

The fighting sequences have been handled in a very comical cutesy fashion. Rather than blood and guts everywhere, you're treated to some cutesy rolls, twirls and cartoony exits when you're beaten.

From the moment you see the huge intro sequence to the time you see the wind rustle through the trees or blow across the lakes, it's hard not to be impressed. The same too applies to the sound effects, which alter as you scroll around your graphical world. One moment you might hear the honest graft of a woodcutter felling another pine, the next you'll hear the serene sound of the waves lapping around the edge of a lake. As if this isn't enough for your money, you also get 50 missions and a two-player option so you can battle it out with a friend or your Amiga.

With so many of the same type of title knocking around in the shops it's really refreshing to see a product that is fresh and entertaining. Also, unlike the majority of software that is flung upon us without thought or thorough checking, Settlers is actually well programmed, with almost no disk-swapping and hardly any accessing.

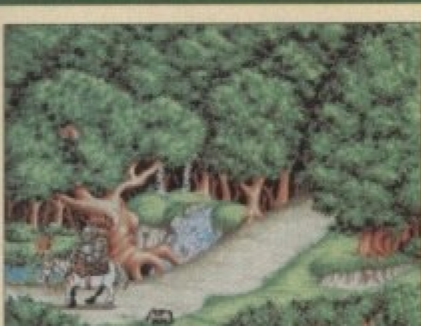
The bottom line is that Settlers is an absolute pleasure to play and could well become one of the contenders for our Game of the Year award.

SIMON CLAYS

How green is your valley?



A Knight's tale

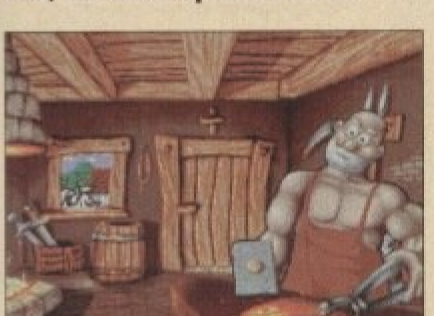


A tired knight was on the road to spy a nun in habit,
But from his convent quest he needed rest, and ended up with a rabbit.



As day drew in our tired knight he came across a village,
I'm tired, I'm sore, and life's a bore, I can no longer rape and pillage.

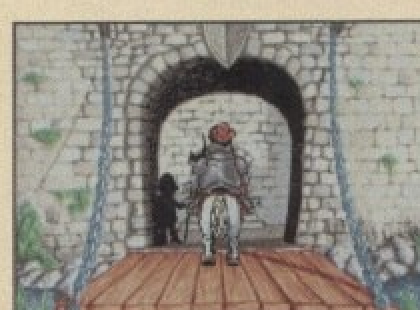




I'll settle down in this here town and live a life of truth.
What's this I hear, it sounds quite queer, he's banging an iron hoof.



A knight like me deserves a place that's plush and out of danger
A double stable, four rooms, a table, and an en suite torture chamber.



I like the moat, I like the keep and I like the marble floor
All brass knobs and halogen hobs and a massage parlour next door.

VISION: 9/10

AUDIO: 8/10

DIFFICULTY: 8/10

LASTABILITY: 9/10

93%

Settlers could well go down as a classic. While it contains elements that liken it to Populous it's not a clone. Settlers stands up on its own two feet because it has great playability coupled with neat graphics and an especially user-friendly game system.

Publisher ➤	Kampart
Developer ➤	Blue Byte
Disks ➤	3
Price ➤	£34.99
HD Install ➤	Yes
Size ➤	1 meg

TERMINATOR 2 THE ARCADE GAME

For your enjoyment, a frenzied Operation Wolf style shoot-'em-up based on the smash hit film of the same name. Hasta la Vista... baby



Wander around a warehouse while killing loads of rampant Arnie lookalikes. 'Tis fun!



Hey you! Has anyone told you about your face rotting problem?



A quick lesson in life. Don't ever give a Terminator a lift

Ah yes, I remember the days of Operation Wolf, an arcade game that captured the hearts and eyes of the masses. Violent it may have been, but the kids loved it to bits.

News from afar reached our merry land. The arcade blast-'em-up was being converted to home computers. Oh yes, one single payment and your mouse became your lethal weapon and no longer would you ply the arcade machine with ten pences a plenty.

Operation Wolf had arrived and games players around the world smiled... a lot. The sequel, Operation Thunderbolt, didn't cause as much of a stir and came and went, but for a long time now gamers have gone without a decent Operation Wolf style shoot-'em-up.

Virgin and Acclaim have got together to rectify this little problem and the answer was to convert the highly successful Terminator 2 arcade game to your home computer screen.

The arcade version of Terminator 2 ranks very highly on my list of top ten arcade blasters not least because you could get to grips with an Uzi (with realistic firing action!).

I was quite worried when I heard that a home computer version was on its way. The reason is the fact that although both of the Operation games transferred quite well to the monitor screen, they didn't quite manage to capture the atmosphere and excitement of the arcade versions. But remember, never look a gift horse in the mouth, a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, err or something!

Everyone should know the story of Terminator 2 by now, but for those who don't here is a brief synopsis. Ten years ago the machines of Skynet sent a Terminator from the future to kill Sarah Connor. They failed to achieve their objective. Hey, if at first you don't succeed!

So the machines changed their target, this time turning their attentions on the future leader of the resistance, the young John Connor. This time a re-programmed Terminator is sent to protect him and thus the action and adventure starts once more.

You play the part of Arnold Schwarzenegger and have to shoot it out with loads of enemy characters who featured in the films, all the time trying to avoid shooting innocent humans.

There are eight levels to complete and each one is inhabited by hundreds of T-800 endoskeletons and cyborgs. As you progress through the stages you face dozens of flying and ground-based Hunter Killer craft and ultimately, of course, the shape-changing T-1000.

Your mouse (or joystick) plays the part of your gun which can be enhanced with the likes of guided missiles and smart bombs. As with Operation Thunderbolt, there is the opportunity to let a second player join the intense action.

There isn't a lot more to tell you about Terminator 2 because it is such a basic game, so it looks like a good time to give you my final opinion on Virgin's frenetic blaster.

First of all I have to give a nod and a wink in Probe Software's direction because they have made a really good job of converting a massive arcade hit onto the Amiga.

NICE TOUCHES

Obviously it is not quite as good as the arcade version, but I don't think a better job could have been achieved by another software developer.

The graphics are brilliant and have been faithfully re-created from the arcade version. There are some nice touches in there such as the T-800 Terminators getting their heads shot off.

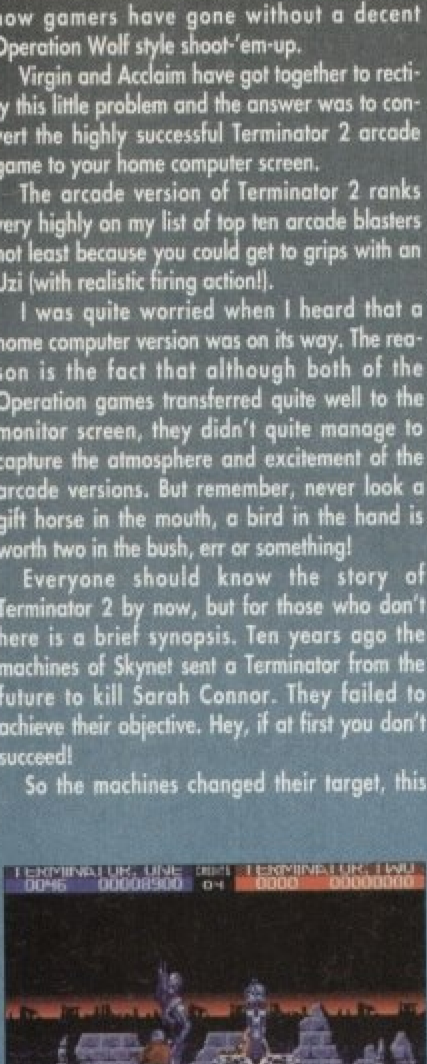
The sound is not too bad with a liberal sprinkling of samples such as "Hasta la vista baby", but the music is not that good and had me reaching for the volume switch.

The control method is much more accurate than the arcade machine could be, but sometimes seems to suffer and I found that the guided missiles don't always guide themselves.

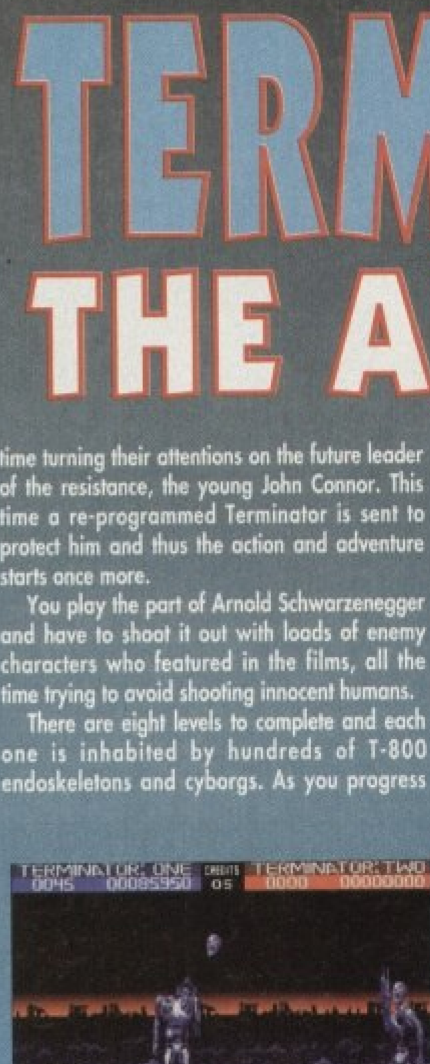
It is a bloody hard game and after much playing I managed to get to level five, but I had to use all five credits to get there. Sometimes the game seems to slow down when there is too much on the screen, but maybe that is because I was crap and couldn't clear the enemy from the screen quick enough.

Terminator 2 was an ambitious project by Virgin and they seem to have pulled it off. A lot of people out there will love this game while others will frown and prefer the arcade version, but that's public opinion for you. If you like it, buy it. If you don't, don't.

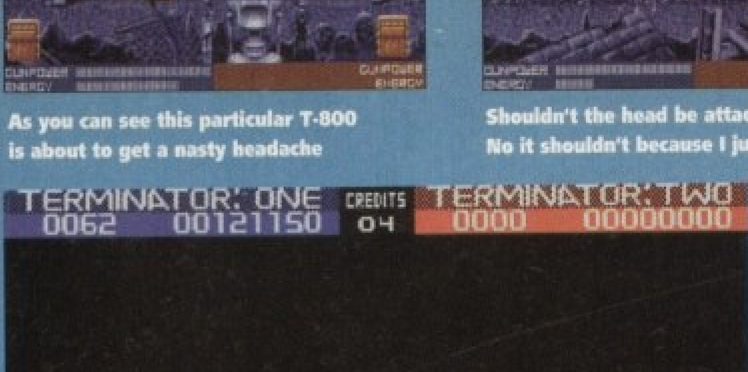
JONATHAN MADDOCK



As you can see this particular T-800 is about to get a nasty headache



Shouldn't the head be attached to the body? No it shouldn't because I just blew if off!



Oh now that is a nice bit of gold-plating. I'm obviously fighting a higher class of Terminator

VISION

AUDIO

DIFFICULTY

LASTABILITY

85%

Terminator 2 is a highly recommended and very tough shoot-'em-up with top-notch graphics. An impressive arcade conversion from the guys and gals at Probe Software.

Publisher ➤	Virgin
Developer ➤	Probe Software
Disks ➤	1
Price ➤	£29.99
HD Install ➤	No
Size ➤	1 meg

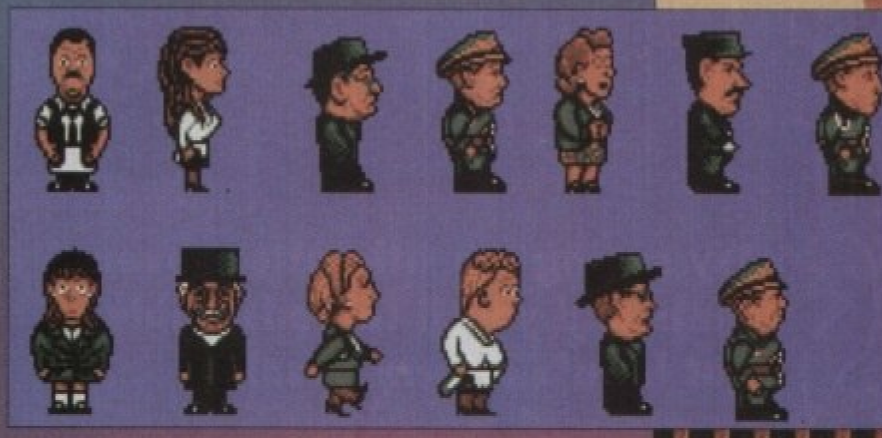
As you may have already guessed, Allo Allo is a TV-licensed game from the extremely funny BBC hit series. Many an evening I sat in watching this hilarious sitcom, amazed at the comic genius of it all, chortling in merriment as Rene Artois searched around for the Fallen Madonna with the Big Boobies by Van Clomp, and the idiotic English Policeman mispronounced his French vocabulary.

And not forgetting Monsieur Alfonse's Dickey Ticker. Ooh pass me a needle and thread, I think my sides have split.

Well the game sticks very closely to this story line and copies the same kind of humour ("Goody, Goody, I must buy it!" I hear you cry) but do not despair yet, mon ami. The game isn't half bad really. Well, sort of.

It's a basic little platform romp but with some nice touches and luckily you have the option to turn off the dreadful accordion music soundtrack.

Right then, so off you set as Rene (or Michelle



Some of the top characters from the series



Well if you've always wanted to throw your Y-Fronts at Mimi's head then now's your chance

ALLO ALLO

Bonjour mes petits! Allow me to don my French maid's costume to tell you about zis new release from Alternative Software

of the Resistance if in two-player mode) to find your Knockwursts with the stolen paintings in.

You can be helped along by your friends and associates by throwing the various objects (teapots, vases, even the odd bra or two) that can be found at them. They will then spring into life and help defeat your enemies in some way.

For instance, Edith will start singing which will temporarily deafen the baddies (in the form of German guards) and stop them coming after you. Or Yvette will flash her stockings to distract them (the best part of the game according to some here in the office which doesn't really say much!). Graphics-wise it's quite good. The house, for example, is well drawn and there is a lot of attention to detail. Even the layout is the same as the set on the television.

The characters are easily recognisable from the series, too. For instance, Rene remains the stumpy, plump geeser complete with dodgy moustache (how he managed to get those saucy waitresses into the stock cupboard I don't know).

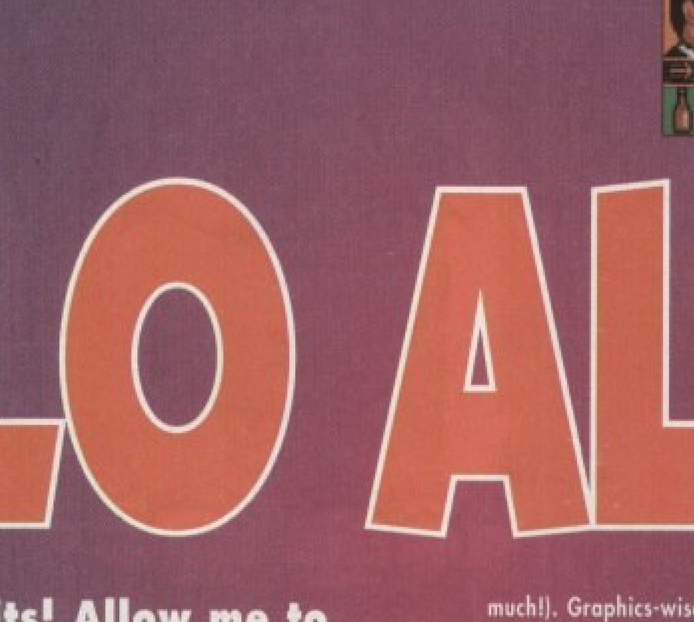
There are some good cartoony effects such as characters having birds tweeting around their heads if they have been hit, and typical cartoony words like "pow" or "zap" appearing above them.

Playability is a tad limited though and in two-player mode it's really strange only being able to see one of the characters at a time. Even though invisible characters cannot be harmed by guards, they can still move about or be injured in a fall, which is a bit silly.

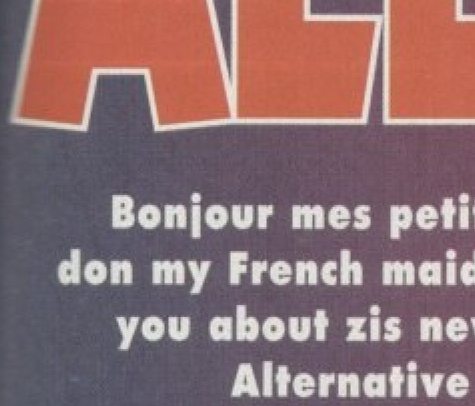
The way the "Game Over" is signalled also becomes intensely annoying. Rene just shrugs his shoulders and goes off to hide in a cupboard. It's really difficult to replenish your life meter, too. It should be done by collecting bottles, but they're impossible to find when you really need them.

The difficulty level of the game is about right but how long this French buffoonery will last you is hard to say. The humour becomes rather tedious after a while as does the gameplay. Frustratingly addictive? Nope, just frustrating. Pass me the Stella Artois...

TINA HACKETT



Here's Monsieur Alfonse the Undertaker who's after Rene's stunning wife



The highlight of the game – supposedly

VISION 7/10

AUDIO 3/10

DIFFICULTY 7/10

LASTABILITY 6/10

65%

If you like corny platformers, French accordion music and have a soft spot for Rene's sausage, go for it. Reassuringly expensive? Hardly!

Publisher ➤	Alternative Software
Developer ➤	Inhouse
Disks ➤	2
Price ➤	£24.99
HD Install ➤	No
Size ➤	½ meg

FURY OF THE FURRIES



Derrr de, derrr de, derrr de. De de de de de de de de. Diddle der. What do you mean it sounded nothing like the Jaws theme tune?

Try saying the title after seven pints and you'll fail miserably, but here's a furry puzzler courtesy of Mindscape



Eight-legged fireball frenzy! The Yellow Tiny runs for his life after being suspected for spider burning, er probably...





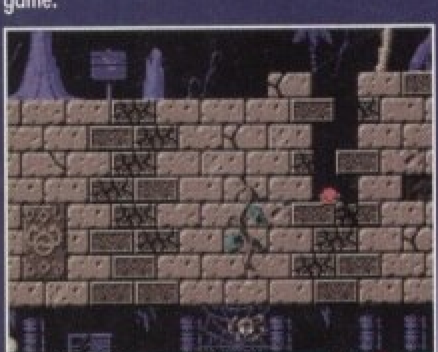
The map of the Tinies world. We start off with the desert level...

Remember Tiny Skweeks? Yes, of course you do, it featured those multi-coloured fuzzballs and was French. French software houses are not exactly renowned for their "normal" games and Tiny Skweeks was a fairly bizarre piece of software.

The Skweeks have now returned although they're now known as Tinies. The reason is because the people who converted the Skweek games onto the Amiga loved the style of the characters and wanted to do their own game, but as the name was already taken they had to come up with a new one.

So, it's not actually a sequel to Skweeks, but the characters look almost identical and you could be forgiven for thinking that it is actually a sequel, but it's not. Err yes I think I got that right.

Next problem. Despite the fact that I called it a puzzle game a minute or so ago, it isn't actually just a puzzle game. It is in fact a hybrid of a platformer, puzzler, adventure and an action game.



The red Tiny delves into a spot of early lunch. Gravel and concrete sarnie anyone?

The aim of the game is to make your way through the eight regions of Sklumph (the world of the Tinies). Why must you do this? Well, a Tiny known as the Wicked One has taken control of the castle and captured the King and has in-turn thrown complete chaos and torment over the land.

It is up to you to guide a Tiny to save the King and otherthrow the Wicked One. On each screen you must find a way out which is indicated by a bloody big sign with "exit" scrawled upon it.

Via the use of some magic rings your Tiny can change into different coloured Tinies who each have their own special power. The yellow tiny utilises the power of fire and can throw fireballs and go through flames. The blue tiny has the ability to dive underwater and spit air bubbles to attack the various enemies found on the planet.

The green Tiny can throw out a line and hook himself onto almost any object (including flying enemies) and swing about avoiding hazards just like Spiderman. When the tiny is red he gets so hungry that he can eat certain bits of the surroundings which is very handy for finding bonus rooms.

This ability to change into different forms is what brings the puzzle element into Fury of the Furries. Just to make things even more difficult there are colour fields dotted around certain levels that takes one of the Tiny's powers away.

Fury of the Furries is a quirky little game and one which I think the games buying public's opinion will be divided upon. Some people will absolutely love it while others will detest it.

I actually quite like it and it does grow on you the more you play it. There are 100 levels in the game, so it will take you a long time to complete it. The variation in the levels is also enough to keep you entertained.

Graphically the game's characters are rather small, but just like Lemmings they still manage to command your attention. Leaving the Tinies alone for a few moments will have them performing all manner of amusing antics – just one of the nice touches in Fury of the Furries.

The sound is very cheesy and layered with an organ effect that will irritate innocent bystanders, although it won't affect the gamesplayer. The control system is exceptionally good and moving the characters around the screen becomes second nature to you almost immediately.

Fury of the Furries is a strange one which will appeal to certain gamers, so try before you buy, but if you want something different this month then you need look no further.

JONATHAN MADDOCK



Tug 'o war! The swinging greenie gets to grips with a brick



The new lord of the jungle! Swingin' times are ahead in Fury of the Furries

VISION	8/10
AUDIO	7/10
DIFFICULTY	8/10
LASTABILITY	9/10

80%

Fury of the Furries is a cutesy bundle of fun and is an original product, but it won't appeal to everyone. I kinda liked it though!

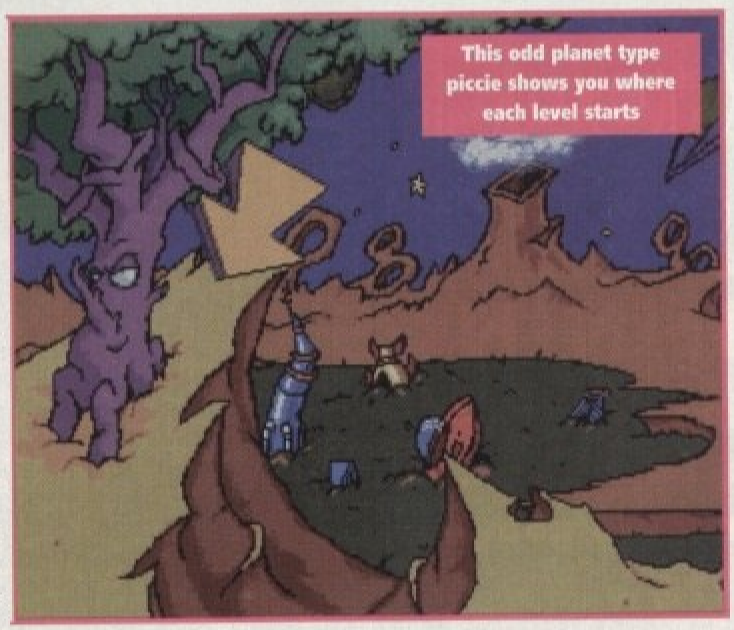
Publisher	Mindscape
Developer	Kalisto
Disks	5
Price	£25.99
HD Install	No
Size	1 meg

BUBBA 'N' STIX





At long last a game about van drivers, aliens and a man's real best friend, his stick


This odd planet type piccie shows you where each level starts

It's not that often that one can recall a release which stars a van driver as its principle character. In fact, I don't think there's ever been one up until now (if I'm wrong, it's answers on a postcard to the usual address).

Now, I've nothing against van drivers, well apart from when they're on the road that is. Slower than a car, but faster than a lorry they seem to haunt the fast lane of our road network, fully paid up members of the exclusive "we own the road club".

Thankfully, Bubba 'n' Stix isn't about you driving down the M6, attempting to dodge and weave through three lanes of Transit-wielding pyschos, all half an hour late for that job in Preston.

Instead, what we have ladies and gentlemen is a very interesting little platform puzzler, or puzzform (maybe?)

The action centres around Bubba, the van driver, who is on a job to Preston and you have to dodge through three lanes of... no, not really.

Bubba is on his way to the local zoo with a lorry-load of wild animals. Unfortunately, someone else is on the look out for additions to their animal menagerie.

High up in the clouds a spaceship suddenly descends and swoops down on the oblivious Bubba, kidnapping him and his live cargo.

Now, the alien at the helm of the offending spaceship is the rather clumsy Glik. He is under orders from his boss to bring home to their planet various species from around the universe – just another delivery driver really; see the irony folks?

Unfortunately for Glik, he manages to lose control of his ship and sends it spiralling towards the planet below. In the ensuing crash, both Bubba and the other occupants of the spaceship are sent flying out of the back of the ship, onto the surface of the alien world.

As Bubba recovers, he is hit on the head by a stick. But, this is no ordinary stick, this is Stix. As Bubba goes to walk away, Stix follows him.

This is a pretty dumb thing to have done because for the rest of the game Stix is continually thrown, wedged and trodden on. Ah well, we'll just presume that he's a good old stick.

Anyway, whatever the context of their relationship, what we have here is a very clever little puzzler. The first level sits you on the planet surface where you crashed, and almost serves as a tutorial for you to become familiar with the uses of Stix.

It takes the first of five or ten minutes when you're playing Bubba to become familiar with the logic behind the puzzles and the many ways you can manipulate Stix.

As well as the usual forms of punishment you'd expect to use a stick for, like beating aliens up, many of the puzzles rely on using Stix in other ways. He can be used as a snooker cue, a tightrope balance, a javelin and a platform to either jump or walk on.

Progressively the levels get tougher, not only the aliens you must fight, but in the puzzle solving and dexterity department.



Two portions of fish and chips and a portion of mushy peas, please... no?

Bubba 'n' Stix comprises of five levels and a number of bonus stages, and features all of the things you lucky rascals have come to expect of platformers like restart points, power-ups and score bonuses.


Bubba gets the shock of his life, when custom officials detect him smuggling a shipment of drugs in his stick

What's really nice about Bubba 'n' Stix is the animation. Bubba and all his adversaries are beautifully animated in a very cartoon style. In fact, there are times when the game feels more like an interactive cartoon than a computer game.

The backdrops are also really well arted and add to the whole feel of the play, which is definitely lodged in the slapstick section. For example, when Bubba encounters Glik, all plans to recapture him seem to backfire with slapstick consequences.

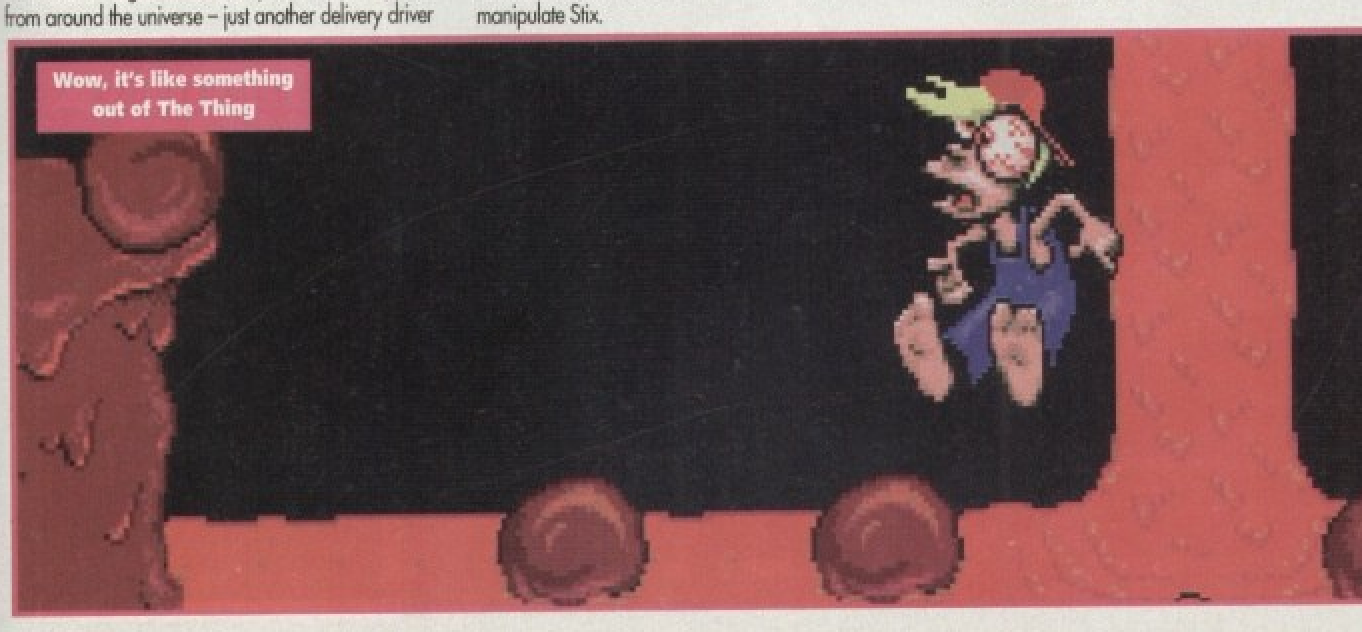
In just about every department, this is a winner. Bubba 'n' Stix is truly what you would describe as nice, and that's not meant in any derogatory way.

The graphics are smooth and well animated, the play is pretty addictive and even the soundtrack doesn't annoy you. What more could you want?

SIMON CLAYS



Bubba uses the old "get the alien to smash the other one over the head with a lump of four by two" routine to great effect


Wow, it's like something out of The Thing

VISION GGGGGGGG (8/10)

AUDIO GGGGGGGG (8/10)

DIFFICULTY GGGGGGG (7/10)

LASTABILITY GGGGGGG (7/10)

85%

It looks good, it sounds good, it even plays good. By jingo, it is good. A definitely sound investment for platform puzzle cartoon fans (you can tell I read the press releases like a good boy).

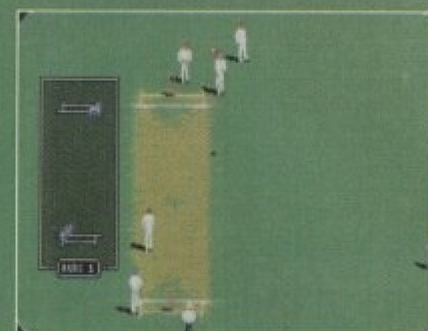
Publisher >	Core Design
Developer >	In house
Disks >	2
Price >	£25.99
HD Install >	No
Size >	1 meg



Howzat! Another fiendish 90mph delivery from Curtly Ambrose leaves Lewis with a long trudge back to the showers



Boycott guide to Creekeet No 1, Adjust your strap, keep stump straight and that'll keep yer bails intact



Boycott guide to Creekeet No 2, If you want to stay in forever and not score any runs like I used to, don't hit the ball



To get anywhere in this game you've got to watch your weekeet and keep your bat straight.

GRAHAM GOOCH'S WORLD CLASS CRICKET SECOND INNINGS

Yes indeedy, it's time once more to buckle up your pads, adjust your strap and watch out for those googlies

The very thought of cricket sends the mind spinning into images of summer. Pictures of lying in sun-bleached fields with nostrils filled with pollen and a head filled with the hazy, lazy sound of leather on willow are summoned.

Unfortunately the reality of village cricket is much different. This form of cricket has long since lost any hint of being the gentle, noble sport it once was.

Instead what you get for your *apres* Sunday pub entertainment is 22 overweight farm hands filled to the brim with whatever ale has been quaffed in the nearest hostelry.

Filled with as much Dutch courage as is possible within the allotted time, it seems the romantic image of the sporting gent is lost. What remains is one bloke chucking a piece of solid leather at another bloke with a large blunt piece of wood in his hands.

The sole intention of the chap with the plank in his grip is to hit the speeding leather at ten chaps who stand around in various stupid locations waiting to block the lump of speeding cow skin with their soft fleshy areas.

That's the amateurs, the professional is obviously a different animal altogether. But what neither seemed capable of pulling off was a decent computer simulation of the noble sport.

Both Robin Smith and Beefy Botham have bowled veritable no-balls in this particular department, coming up with pretty tame licences which have disappeared quicker than the English middle order.

PLAYABLE

The only man who seems to have pulled it off is the Nigel Mansell of the cricket world, Graham Gooch. The Essex and ex-England captain (with just a tad of help from Audiogenic) produced a very playable, fairly realistic cricket simulation.

Well, the moustachioed one is back with an improved version of the game called Second Innings. Getting to grips with Second Innings is fairly simple and the system it employs for control relatively straightforward.

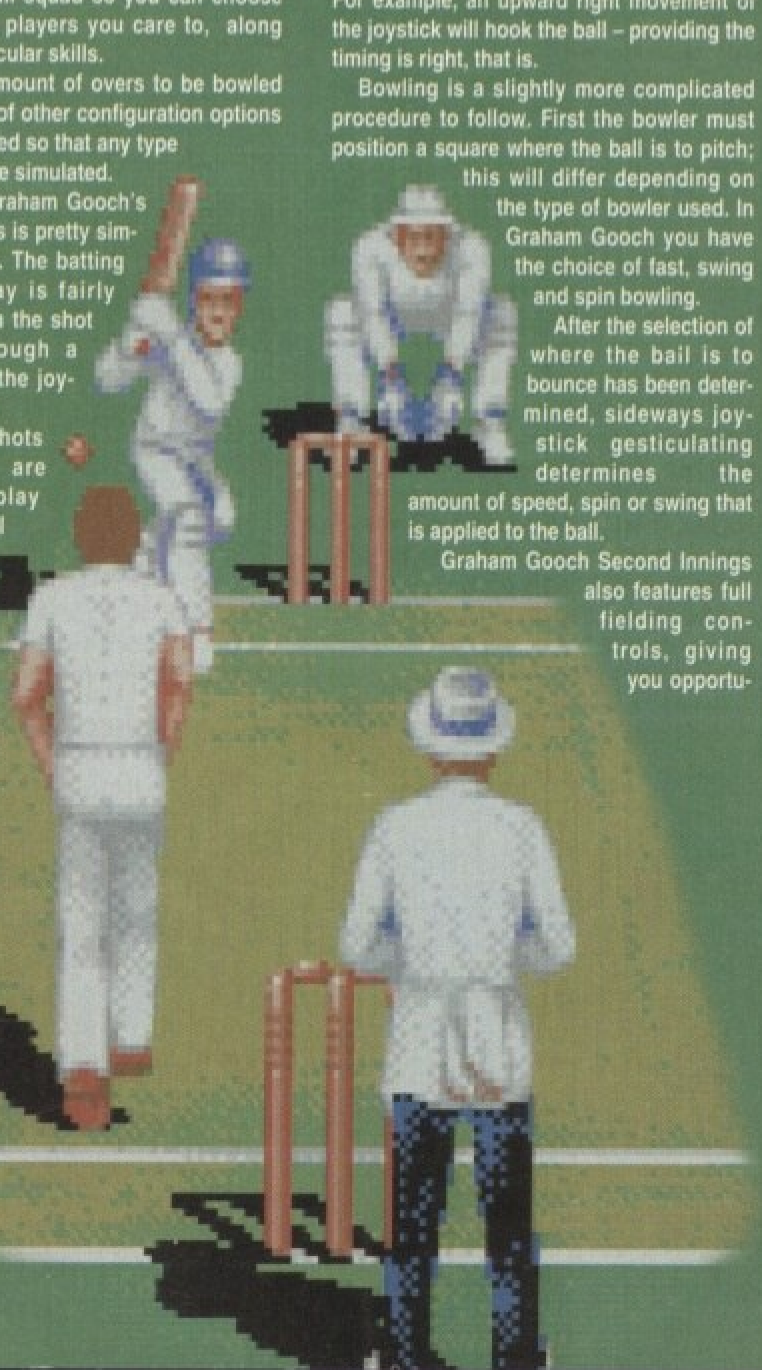
Initially the first thing to set up are the match parameters. You have the choice of just about every World class team you could care to mention – even England. But, with SI you can also choose from every county side in the country plus a "moments from history" option.

This option allows you to re-live great matches from the past – for example, Ian Botham smashing the Aussies to pieces in the third test back in 1981. Within all the teams are a full squad so you can choose the individual players you care to, along with their particular skills.

Duration, amount of overs to be bowled and a number of other configuration options can all be altered so that any type of match can be simulated.

Playwise, Graham Gooch's Second Innings is pretty simple to pick up. The batting aspect of play is fairly instinctive with the shot selected through a movement of the joystick.

All of the shots that you are allowed to play have a natural relationship with movements of the joystick.



For example, an upward right movement of the joystick will hook the ball – providing the timing is right, that is.

Bowling is a slightly more complicated procedure to follow. First the bowler must position a square where the ball is to pitch; this will differ depending on the type of bowler used. In Graham Gooch you have the choice of fast, swing and spin bowling.

After the selection of where the bail is to bounce has been determined, sideways joystick gesticulating determines the amount of speed, spin or swing that is applied to the ball.

Graham Gooch Second Innings also features full fielding controls, giving you opportunity to alter your field placings. In fact, you can practically replicate everything feasible within the parameters of cricket – except for an England collapse.

One of the main differences between Gooch and his older brother is that the computer batsmen are vastly improved – they've obviously been in the nets between releases.

TOUGHER

This makes for a much tougher game against the computer, though I have to confess I personally didn't really enjoy playing the Amiga that much. By far the best option is to get hold of one of your friends, grab a second joystick and do battle against each other.

Though most of the changes to Second Innings are extra statistics and updated team lists, the playability, while not altered cosmetically, has also been tweaked.

Second Innings is without doubt the most playable, graphically pleasing and realistic cricket sim to ever bowl the Amiga over.

I doubt that a non-cricket type person could ever fall in love with Graham Gooch (could any human being, even Mrs Gooch?). But, if you have a basic knowledge and a slight interest in the sport, then it's a highly enjoyable change from the normal platformers and shoot-'em-ups.

SIMON CLAYS

VISION

AUDIO

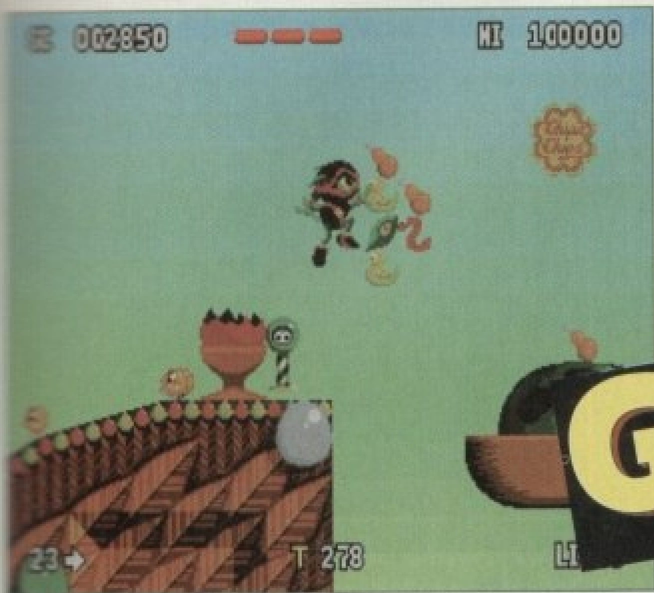
DIFFICULTY

LASTABILITY

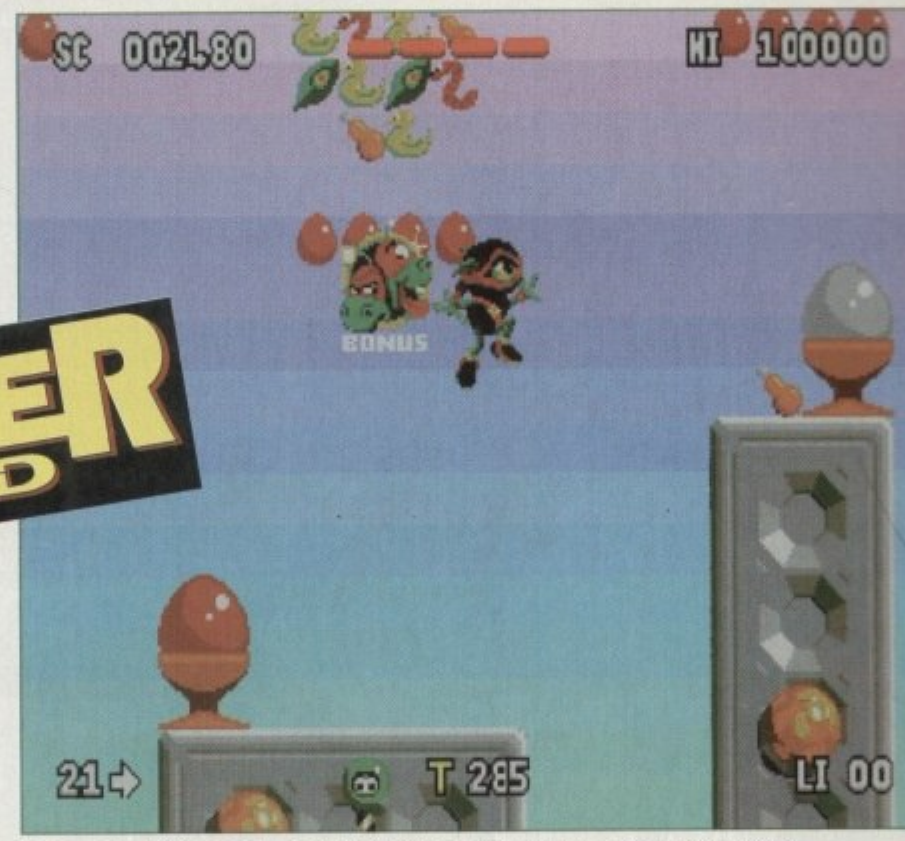
Second Innings is the only cricket simulation worth spending your money on. **84%**

Though it's only a data disk and the changes seem somewhat superficial, it plays and responds better than its predecessor.

Publisher ➤ Audiogenic
Developer ➤ In house
Disks ➤ 1
Price ➤ £17.99
HD Install ➤ No
Size ➤ 1 meg



It's a chicken pickin', lolly lickin' restart point



Ooh an absolutely hoooge bonus with his old Pedigree Chum, Zoon, on the front

GAMER GOLD

ZOOL 2

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's the return of the ninja from the nth dimension and this time he's got company

Once again the nth dimension is under attack from the forces of non-imagination, the evil Krool and his accomplice Mental Block. Zool, assisted by his female companion Zooz and Zoon the intergalactic wonderdog, are here to save the universe from boredom.

So what have Gremlin come up with this time around? What new and wondrous features have been added to make this a darn fine sequel?

Well, there's the new two-player mode, and of course, this time around Zool can be helped out by his kinky, whip-cracking assistant Zooz.

The game is instantly playable, the controls have been made easier, the sound effects groovier, backdrops more colourful and detailed. The game is bigger than Jean-Claude Van Damme's biceps and each level is jam-packed with impressive graphics and bright and imaginative sprites that you can fire bullets at and, in Zooz's case, whip!

The enemies change from level to level and are related to the world they live in. At the end of each world there is the tough end-of-level guardian, Mental Block, who has morphed himself into some baddy which is again appropriate to the level.

The worlds have been ingeniously named (well, sort of) like Tooting Common, Bulberry Hill and Snaking Pass. There are many bonus rooms to stumble across filled with Chuppa Chups goodies along with other bonuses scattered around the levels (you must collect 99 per cent of them to complete the level) and others which will help you out such as Shields, bonus hearts and thankfully many restart points.

The ninjas are also helped by some new moves. Pressing Fire while your character is in the air will result in spinning power jumps and back flips can be achieved to reach heights an ordinary jump wouldn't get to. False floors and ceilings can be broken through to reach other parts of the level.

This is where your choice of character can matter as Zool can only go through ceilings and Zooz can only go through floors and therefore the game can be completed in different ways .

However, the downside of the game is that the range of options are not as varied as Zool 1. There are the bog standard options you would normally expect to find on your average platformer such as level of difficulty, music or sound effects, but the nice touches that were added to Zool 1 are missing.

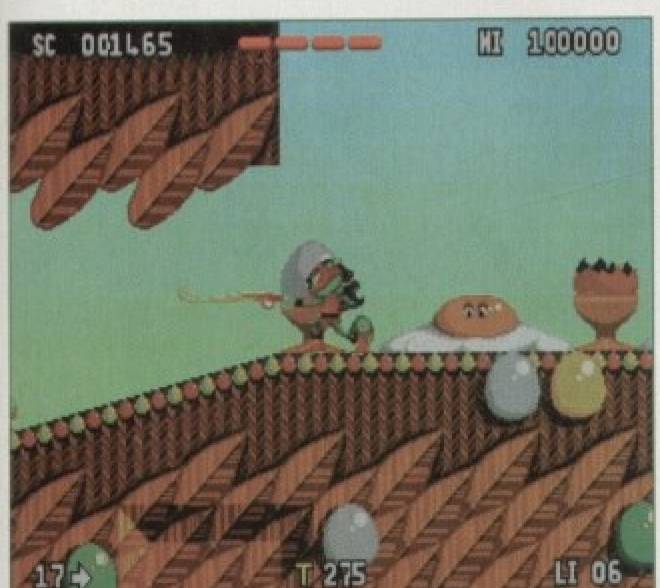
In Zool 1 you could choose the type of music you wanted from rock to rave, or the speed of the game could be chosen, as could whether you wanted Zool to come to a halt quickly or slowly – all of which all combined to make the game stand out from other platformers. A two-player mode has been added to give a new angle to the game, but it seems a little pointless because you and your companion have to take turns to play.

Well, surely that doesn't make much difference and can be done on a normal one-player game? Maybe if a split-screen option could have been introduced it would have added some variety from Zool 1.

There is no doubt that Zool 2 is a very able platformer. The graphics are amazing, the sound effects superb and it boasts great playability.

But, as with a lot of sequels, it inevitably lose its originality and novelty value. If you're a platform addict and enjoyed Zool 1 then you'll probably go for this but don't expect anything too original.

TINA HACKETT



Whip crack away, whip crack away! Zooz's knees turn to orange jelly as she goes for those bonuses



Zool goes quackers over those ducky-type bonuses

VISION
GGGGGGGGG

AUDIO
GGGGGGGGG

DIFFICULTY
GGGGGGGG

LASTABILITY
GGGGGGGG

Although not highly original, Zool 2 is a great platformer – it has superb graphics an amazing soundtrack and speedy gameplay.

90%

Publisher ➤ Gremlin
Developer ➤ In House
Disks ➤ 2
Price ➤ £25.99
HD Install ➤ No
Size ➤ 1 meg



The first level and while exotic birds fly overhead, the killing has already started below...



Clicking on the world icon will give you a map of the current level. Handy for planning routes and pointing out places of historical interest!



The warm weather causes our brave troops to strip off into their cozzies and take a nice relaxing dip in a nearby river

CANNON FODDER

Sensible Software return with a bang with their supposedly controversial war-'em-up

An outraged Liberal Democrat MP called it "monstrous". British Legion chiefs labelled it "appalling". The *Star* said it was "shameful" and advised people to make sure they didn't buy it.

As you might have guessed from the headline on the page, "it" is Cannon Fodder, Sensible Software's latest offering. Why all the publicity and all the fuss? Well, papers will be papers and they will blow things out of proportion.

The reason for all this uncalled for and unfair publicity is because Sensible included the distinctive poppy symbol into the game. MP's and war veterans were apparently outraged which is fair enough I suppose, but there are ways and means of getting a problem like that solved.

Having a newspaper sensationalise the problem, going over the top and spreading inaccuracies in their reporting, is not the way to do it. Cannon Fodder is not shameful, monstrous or appalling, but is instead one of the games of 1993 and my money is on it becoming the Christmas number one.

The poppy has now been removed and everyone is happy except perhaps publishers Virgin and Sensible Software themselves who could have done without any of the hassle involved. Enough of all this, you lot want to know about Cannon Fodder. To save you reading to the end of this text I could just tell you to go out and buy it and thus there still might be some copies left in the shops.

Sensible Software have never really produced a bad game and more recently have dominated the software market with such excellent products as Mega-Lo-Mania, WizKid and Sensible Soccer. Most of their titles are tinged with elements of surreal humour, especially WizKid and the highly amusing team names in Sensible Soccer.

Cannon Fodder blasts off with one of the best game tunes of '93. It's a sort of reggae-style composition with a woman singing over the top of it. She croons "War! Never been so much fun!" and you know what? She's probably right.



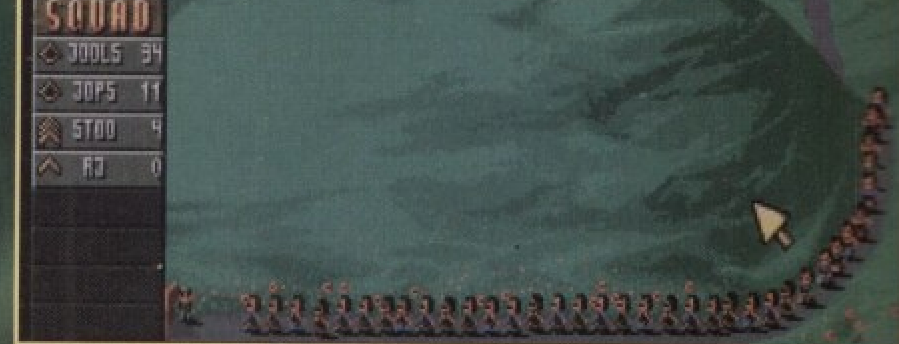
The squad of fearless young men meet up with a native doing a tribal dance

As the song plays you a treated to a menagerie of digitised shots of the Sensible Software team dressed up as soldiers. As good a way as any to get your face in a game I suppose. Once all this tomfoolery has finished it is then time to enter the war zone.

Before the action actually starts, you need to call up some of the 360 fit young men to become troopers.

Only 15 of them are allowed to volunteer for each mission. As missions progress you start to lose men and innocent soldiers are thrown into war with the more experienced troops.

There are 24 missions to complete, each one has a different terrain and objective. Most missions are split into a



Here we admire Boot Hill. A place where several innocent young men volunteer to be shot and killed, err I mean join the army and do their bit for Blighty!



A quick lesson in blowing up enemy sheds. 1. Get grenade 2. Pull pin out 3. Throw at target 4. Stand back and watch while men die and chaos ensues



Quickly evading the quicksand, the brave troop find a boxful of grenades. It's amazing what you find in the jungle



Forget about pointless maiming and killing. Why not take a trip to the beach!

GAMER GOLD

maximum of six phases. You do not directly control troopers, but instead determine their behaviour.

This is achieved by using the mouse, the mouse pointer and a troop leader. Troopers will only follow their leader, but they can also be encouraged to split up and do their own thing.

PRIVATES

At the beginning of your adventure all the troopers are conscripted as lowly Privates (I know a joke about that! Not very funny, but I know one). Your troopers ranks increase for every phase that they survive, but promotion only occurs when the mission is complete.

The missions start off very slowly and are quite easy. You start to wonder why you need 360 men, but as soon as you hit the fifth mission everything gets that little bit harder.

In the previous levels you have met up with "normal" soldiers, but later on you start to meet bazooka wielding troopers and you then realise that Cannon Fodder isn't the breeze you thought it to be.

CONTROLS

The control system is worth mentioning simply because it is so good. The very first level and it becomes as natural as eating your tea. The mouse pointer is swept around the screen and more of the terrain is shown to you. By clicking on that point with the left button, your squadron of troops will move to that point.

The right button is your killing button. When pressed it lets rip with a deadly hail of bullets from your soldiers. If you use a combination of both buttons you can use your grenades or bazookas which causes major destruction upon the enemy.

At first Cannon Fodder looks fairly run-of-the-mill stuff. Some people might even call it an average shoot-'em-up, but as you progress you get addicted and the completion of a level becomes more important than eating, drinking and maybe even life itself (err, probably).

Sensible's war-'em-up is one of those games that you can completely immerse yourself in. The graphics are brilliant. Although the men are small they seem to have characters all of their own which is attributed to the animation. Losing a man is almost like losing a best friend.

There are loads of nice little touches such as the men celebrating after completing the phase to the sound of patriotic World War tunes. Another nice touch is when one of your men takes a bad hit and lies on the floor screaming his head off while blood shoots out of his body and it thus becomes your solemn duty to end his pain.

It's sad and quite painful to watch, but you have to wipe those tears from your eyes and get your revenge by defeating the enemy.

The sound is quite incredible and uses up all four channels to create some startling effects. For instance when you are marching around the jungle, exotic birds fly overhead and their squawking becomes louder the closer they are to your troop.

DIRECTIONAL

There is a more important reason for this directional sound malarkey because you can use it to your distinct advantage. Muted gunfire tells you that enemy soldiers can see you are heading in your direction, the same goes for helicopter rotor blades. The rumbling of a tank means that you should run very fast in the opposite direction.

SUMMING UP

Being a games reviewer you must point out good and bad points for each piece of software, but I am getting a headache from trying to criticise Cannon Fodder. I suppose it could do with a two-player option, but apart from that I can't really find cause for complaint.

I love Cannon Fodder and so should you. If you still haven't bought it then I must stand up and question your state of mind. Sensible Software seem to go on from strength to strength. Cannon Fodder is one of the most playable games you will ever play and also one of the most fun. A rootin' tootin' shoot-'em-up of the highest order.

JONATHAN MADDOCK

VISION
GGGGGGGGG

AUDIO
GGGGGGGGG

DIFFICULTY
GGGGGGGGG

LASTABILITY
GGGGGGGGGG

94%

Gorgeous graphics, sumptuous sound, phenomenal playability and astoundingly addictive. What are you waiting for? Go and buy it.

Publisher ➤	Virgin
Developer ➤	Sensible Software
Disks ➤	3
Price ➤	£29.99
HD Install ➤	No
Size ➤	1 meg

ON THE Drawingboard

Cool Spot

Hey, he's the coolest spot I know and he's putting in a star appearance on the Amiga courtesy of Virgin. Jonathan Maddock goes completely dotty...

Cool Spot. A spot that's cool. Why? Well, after thousands of cutesy characters have infected our minds, it looks like games developers are getting back to basics, and what could be more basic than a red spot?

Hipsters out there who are "up" on the console scene will know that Cool Spot made his fame and fortune on the Mega Drive, and a startlingly good game it was too! Before his transition to the games scene, Cool Spot was just a simple red blob on the side of a 7-Up can. Some clever person must have seen a good marketing opportunity and suggested that: "Hey, wouldn't it be good if we made a game using the 7-Up red dot? Then we'd have loads of kids subliminally forced into buying our rather splendid fizzy drink!"

CONFUSED

As soon as Cool Spot hit the UK, the fizzy drink tie-in fell apart and this left gamers confused as to why there were little green plastic bottles all over the place. The game was so good though that no-one noticed this little discrepancy and gamers bought Cool Spot like it was the last piece of software on Earth.

Virgin, being clever people, decided to convert the console smash hit to the Amiga. They've now got their fingers crossed and are hoping it will sell just as well on the home computers.

Virgin are plugging Mr Spot as the coolest, most controllable and slickest animated character ever seen on any computer or console system. That is a bit of a proud statement, but it could well be true, as their sales on the Mega Drive can testify. The story is relatively simple. Cool Spot's friends, all called Spot (which leads into all kind of comedy situations) have been caught and caged. The being responsible is apparently a bad "dude", has a stupid haircut and possibly the worst name on the planet, which is Wild Wicked Wily Wil. The gamesplayer (that's you) must control Mr Spot, dashing around collecting small

definitely not cool spots. This somehow frees Cool Spot's chums. "How does that work?" I hear you cry. I don't know, but it does!

Cool Spot has a large problem, or should that be small problem? Our dotty chum is only an inch and a half in height, so everyday objects become unbelievable obstacles.

He must battle his way across the beach, the bathroom, and people's bedrooms, and on his way comes into battle with all kinds of cutesy bad guys. His only weapon is linked to his connection with 7-Up. The spot can thus fire (or should that be spew) fearsome bolts of fizzy drink at his enemies.

CONVERSION

John Twiddy, the man responsible for Virgin's other Mega Drive conversion, Global Gladiators, is in charge of the conversion of Cool Spot to the Amiga.

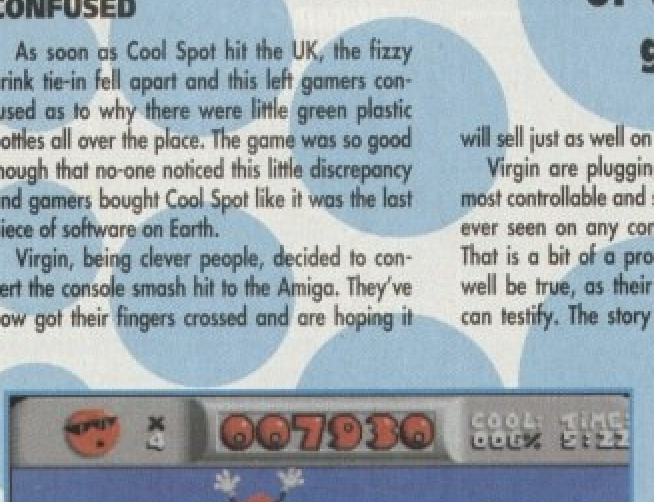
He promises that Cool Spot will be virtually identical to the Mega Drive original. For example, all the animations that were in the console version will appear on the Amiga. There will actually be some slight improvements like Spot's walk being speeded up.

The main difference is that the Amiga screen updates every 25th of a second, where as the Mega Drive updates 50 times a second, so the scrolling isn't going to be as fluid as in the original.

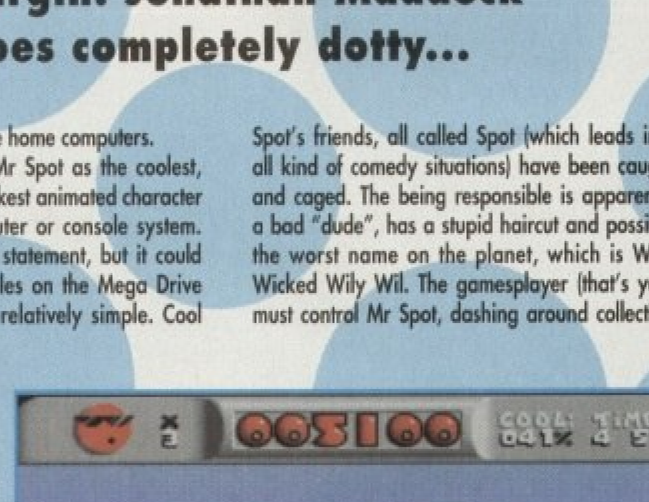
Having played a couple of levels, I have to say that Cool Spot is looking damn fine and I personally can't wait to play the full thing. Another cutesy platform game is on its way, but when they're as good as this we shouldn't really grumble. It's going to a red, round and very, very cool start to 1994.



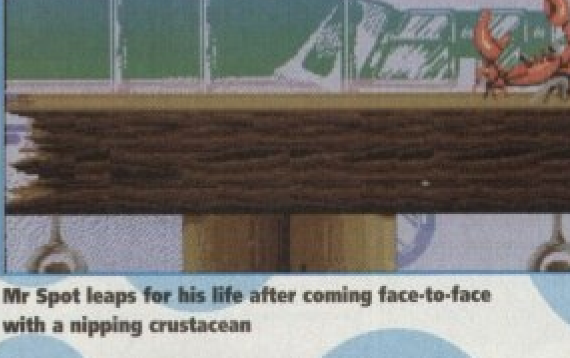
Cool Spot jumps for joy as he frees one of his captured chums

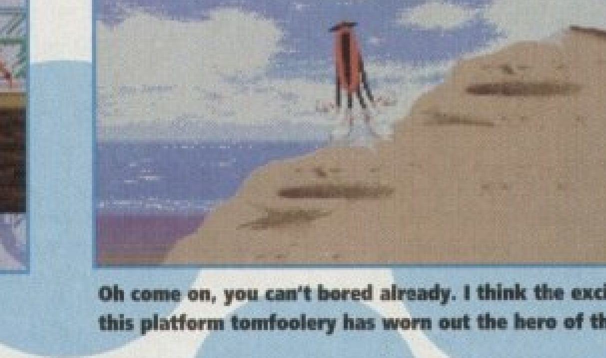


Mr Spot leaps for his life after coming face-to-face with a nipping crustacean

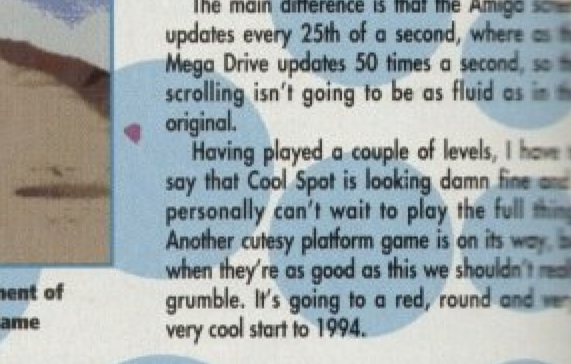


Oh come on, you can't bored already. I think the excitement of this platform tomfoolery has worn out the hero of the game


The character who is, in fact, a Strepsil, surfs in on a green bottle. Coo!



Ballooning around! Cool Spot "hangs" out with, err no-one because he has no friends



Nice pants! One of Spot's evil enemies comes out of his shell

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SECOND SAMURAI

Let's trek to the land of the rising sun and take a look at Psygnosis' action adventure extravaganza!

Quick question! How many of you lot bought First Samurai? Not many I can bet. First Samurai was perhaps one of the most under-rated arcade games of all time. Published by Image Works, a sub-division of the Mirror group, First Samurai went downhill when Mr Maxwell went deep-sea diving.

The distribution of the game suffered badly and it was very hard to find a copy to buy. The only instance when you could obtain it was when it was bundled with Sensible Software's Mega-Lo-Mania a year or so ago.


The first level and you encounter your first "big" enemy, in this case a floating, fire-breathing monster type thing

It really was a crying shame that gamers couldn't play Vivid Image's First Samurai because it was the ultimate Amiga arcade action game of that era. Psygnosis, clever people that they are, have signed up the sequel, so Vivid Image have returned with Second Samurai (nice original title!)

The story is very similar to the original. The Demon King is once more rampaging through time and you as the Samurai Ninja-type bloke must chase after him. Various adversaries stand in your way coupled with an abundance of puzzles to solve.

Second Samurai is a fairly good name, but it has a double meaning. Not only is it the sequel,


Here our hero protects a precious idol from a... a... thingy. No wonder he's crying!

but you can now connect up with a chum and enjoy a simultaneous two-player game. There is a bit of a snag though. The two-player option is a bit duff.

You have the choice of competing against your mate or befriending him/her and working together to defeat the evil Demon King. The choice is, as they say, yours, but they are still both fairly useless.

You see, the screen isn't split into two, so both players cannot move independently around the level. This causes all manner of problems. You can fight for the weapons and power-ups, but it's unfortunately all rather pointless.

This sounds like bad news, but it's not really because if you lock yourself away you can enjoy a damn fine action adventure game via the one-player mode.

Apart from the two-player mistake, everything else has been made bigger and better. The gameplay has been left alone, but that's only because it was so good first time around that it didn't need to be changed.

The graphics have caused a bit of an argument in the office. Some people have said that they look rather dated and very '80s, but I disagree with this. Some of the backdrops are really nice and the sub and end-of-level monsters are so spectacular they almost take your breath away.

If there was an award for biggest game sprites then Second Samurai would walk away with it unchallenged. If you don't believe me just look at screenshots!

The sound effects in the original were one of the high points and luckily the sequel has kept most of the samples. When you kill something you're treated with an orchestral stab and by killing loads of enemies you literally create your own atmosphere.

There are also screams, yells, hallelujahs, err the bit off the Old Spice advert and also the infamous "Oh no! My sword!' sample. The kicks, punches, thwacks and smacks seem to have been lifted from beat – 'em – up favourite International Karate Plus, but hey that's no bad thing!

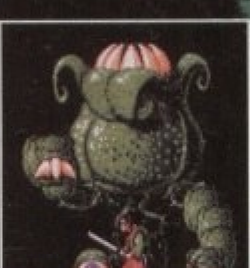
I can't really put my finger on what it is, but I really do love Second Samurai. It's one of those games that you try to play and play until you complete it. The difficulty level is just about right and you seem to progress that little bit further everytime you have a go.

OK, it's maybe not the most original game of all time and the two – player mode is, as I mentioned before, not very good, but there are no outstanding faults with the game.

I would heartily recommend Second Samurai to anyone. If you're looking for a well-programmed, wonderfully playable, graphically brilliant, awesome sounding, highly addictive piece of software you have to look no further than Vivid Image's Second Samurai.

JONATHAN MADDOCK




Eye eye, here's the plant-like end of level baddie. I told you they were massive


Chucking one of your smart bombs you'll be able to do away with this rather menacing dragon. Cor alumme!


There are several objects placed around the levels to aid you in your quest. This one will get you to high places

VISION	9/10
AUDIO	9/10
DIFFICULTY	8/10
LASTABILITY	8/10

An improvement on the original due to it's power in all departments. Highly playable and worth every penny of your cash.

91%

Publisher ➤	Psygnosis
Developer ➤	Vivid Image
Disks ➤	3
Price ➤	£29.99
HD Install ➤	No
Size ➤	1Meg

GAMER GOLD



SHADOWORLDS

Tired of fumbling around in the dark? Then zip up your shiny suit and follow us through the labyrinth of the Shadoworlds

This is the sequel to Shadowlands. It's now set in space, where light and dark both play a vital role. Therefore batteries and flares need to be used sparingly wherever possible.

Before embarking on the mission you will need to select a team of four adventurers. A spread of skills is the best possible combination.

Level 1

This is a small area to explore. Here is the best place to learn about the techniques needed to progress further. Light is required to read computer terminals which give vital clues. Pressure pads and photo-cells can open doors; you should also become familiar with using keys.

All objects found should be taken, as later there are plenty of pressure pads which all need to be opened using weight. After you've got used to the control technique it's off to level two.

Level 2

It should be noted that some of the robots will leave some valuable presents when they are dispatched. In the next two rooms the first long range weapons will be found.

However, all long range weapons have ammunition limitations, so be careful how you use them. It's on this level that the first two recharging stations can be located.

The first re-supplies food and can be used an unlimited number of times. Conversely, the second is for weapons and batteries and can only be used once.

Once all the robots have been eliminated you can proceed to the next level.

Level 3

On entering this level there is another weapons recharge point. It's best to use this one when your ammo is at a minimum.

You should now make your way to the central room of the Biological Research area. Using a light to open the door, there should be a robot. It is carrying a crate, so when you've killed it open the crate.

Take the contents of the crate and deploy it as you see best. Now put the empty crate on the pressure pad to open the next security door.

Enter the next two rooms, kill the robots and pick up the medical pack. You will also find a key; by going to the central room you will be able to use it and enter.

Kill all the robots and you can use the food outlet and the very useful regeneration pad. The pad resurrects dead characters so long as you have bought their DNA pod. Be warned, the pad only works three times.

After this, proceed to the central room and go through the remaining door to the transporter. Warning: beware of the pits en route.

When you arrive at the transporter you should find another weapons recharger, using a green card should secure you a laser – just the ticket!

Level 4

Having exited the transporter, head down the corridor to the first room. Access is denied by a pit, the only way to close the pit is by throwing a flare over it. This will operate a photo-cell, which in turn closes the pit and allows you to pick up another key.

In the next room there is another pit with a key which is just out of reach. Throwing something on the pressure pad moves the key within reach.

Now you can open the corner door and move quickly into the little recess. Fire at the robot when it is as safe as possible, light a flare and throw it towards the door.

The robot will head to the light. As he passes you by, stab him in the back.

Next on the agenda is yet another room which requires the lighting of three photo-cells to get to the key. The following room calls for some teamwork: One man to operate the door switch, the other to fire at the robots.

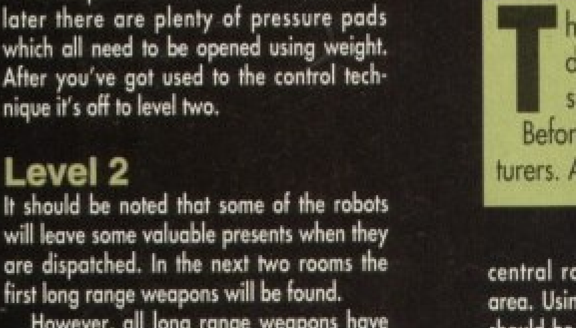
When you've managed to obtain this key, you should leave one man here so he can open the door in a little while to let another man out.

The next room contains a one-way system, so only one man can enter to collect the keys. To get past this section, the man you have sent in must stand at the edge of the pit and throw the keys to another teammate, who will open the door for him to escape.

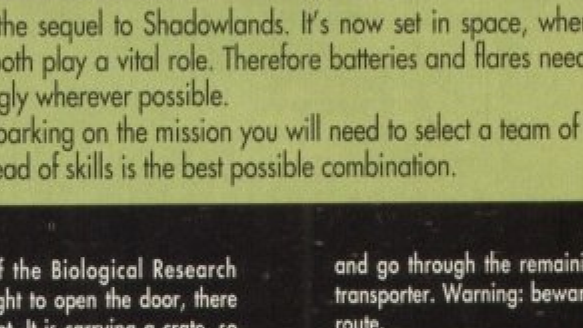
In the next room one character must operate the wall switch which will turn on the transporter. Place a man in the transporter and he will be transported to the little room to pick up a key. Operating a switch sends him to where you left a man to open a door. At this point you can regroup and collect more food if necessary.

The next room contains a key which when picked up, makes three robots appear, so be warned.

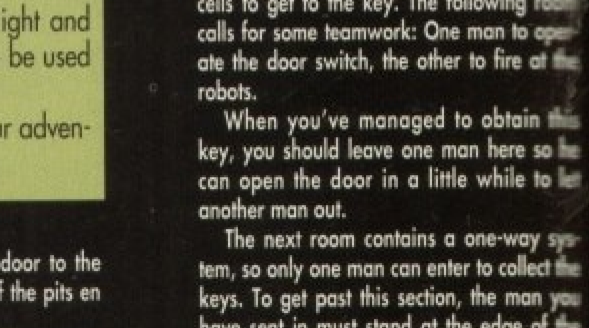
The last room on this level contains a



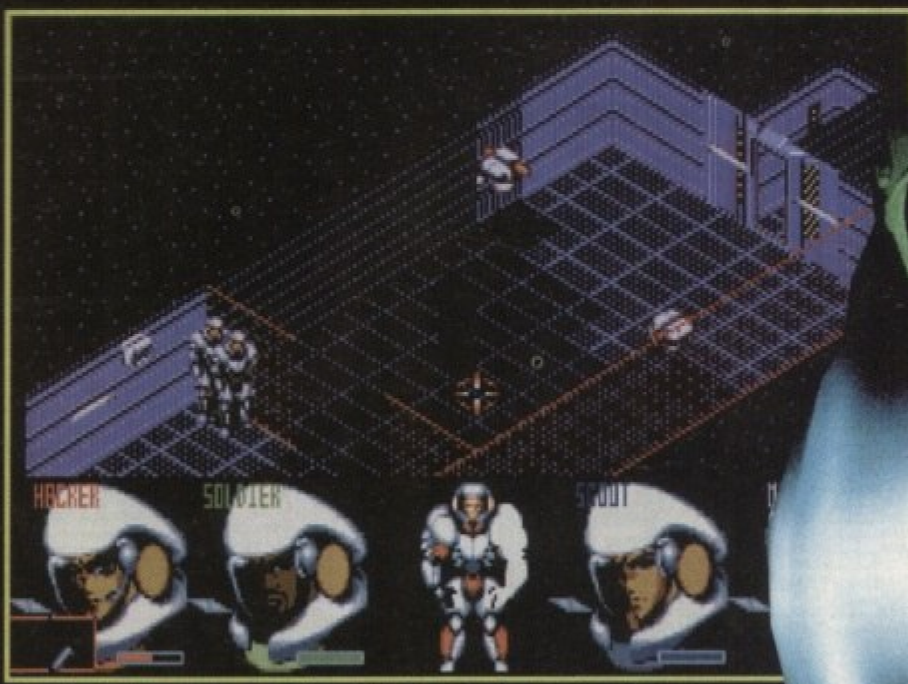
Keep a constant eye on your team's levels and their formation



Always choose a balanced squad which reflects a variety of talents



Look out for pressure pads as they unlock doors



In many circumstances light plays a major part in your success or failure



robot, a key and a slot. Kill the robot and use the gold card in the slot to reveal a secret room full of goodies.

After that dispose of the final robot, and it's off to the teleporter.

Level 5

Outside of the teleporter is a fence. Like all fences in Shadoworlds it should be treated with extreme caution. It's best to walk one man at a time around them for safety.



On the plus side, you can hide behind this fence and the approaching robot will commit suicide.

Then it's a long walk to the central teleporting area. The key that you should have collected opens a door, which will transport you to Ice World.

The character that you send to Ice World should be the strongest and be made as light as is possible.

Level 6 - Ice World

On arrival you will have to move very quickly and dodge the multitude of robots that inhabit this section. Eventually they can be lined up so that they fire on one another.

You can collect the crate and use the transporter pressure pad to get back to the teleporting area.

This crate contains a key so that you can open the next door to get to Jungle World.

Level 7 – Jungle World

The person who you send here needs to be equipped with a light sabre, plenty of flares for light at night and also some food.

Near to the pressure pads are three guards who do not always fire at you. If you are healthy, save the game here.

Using the pad transports you to another jungle, where once again you are attacked immediately on arrival. Collect your crate than flee as fast as possible back to the teleporting area.

Level 5 - Continued

Rest the party again, feed them and kill the robot guards. Now use the teleporter.

Level 8

The first man out of the teleporter should be armed with a flame thrower to kill the wandering bugs which are there to greet you. On this level are four rooms, each has a pressure pad which requires a weight leaving on it to open the exit door.

The top two doors are quite straight-forward. However, the central connecting room is quite tricky, so save the game before venturing further.

On entering you will be attacked by heads, so stand in the doorway and use the light sabre on them. You will then have to very carefully walk one character around the fence that obscures your path.

After killing the remaining head, dodge past the robot in the bottom right room and move onwards.

The last room takes a team effort and plenty of light. This is because all the lights in this area are activated by photo-cells. The last room is occupied by a robot who will kill himself if you occupy the right space.

Level 9

This level is full of pits, but they can be closed by using light to operate the photo-cells. The two rooms are symmetrical so only one side needs to be closed.

Kill the guards and have a lighted flare available. You will approach three photo-cells, which depending on which is activated opens a combination of two doorways.

It is vitally important to leave one man here if you want to complete the game. Walk around the corridor until you reach a switch.

Use a light to open it, and then stand in the doorway with your sabre drawn. As the guards walk by, kill them the third guard will not cause you any bother and can be left alone.

Place objects on the pressure pads to open the next two doors and then move on to the next room.

There are two heads that wander around that must be despatched with immediately. Then find the pressure pad which is up a small dead end, place an object on it and the last door to a teleport will open.

This room contains three buttons. The first will turn on the teleport, so position a man there with a light-sabre, while another team member operates the button.

The teleported character will arrive in a room where casting light onto a photo-cell releases heads. Kill the heads and get the character at the buttons to operate the second.

This will turn on another teleport which transports your character into another similar room. Once again light releases heads which need to be dispatched with. Pick up the key and use the button controller to press the third button which returns the transported character.

Now you have a hell of a trek back to the teleportation room on level five. You can now use the key to open the last room. The character that enters needs to be a fast mover.

Level 10 – Desert World

On arrival walk past the two robots, but do not stand too long in one spot or you may receive a rather unpleasant surprise from a sand monster. progress to the pit and jump in.

Level 11

You will have to move extremely quickly to dodge all the robots that are firing on you. This will probably take some doing and may use nearly all your team.

Provided you have one survivor everything will be all right. Once all the robots have killed each other there's only one room to contend with.

Throw a lighted flare into the room and it releases two heads. Stand in the entrance way and despatch them using the light sabre.

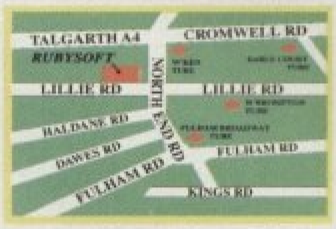

Always keep a sharp eye on your team's formation

A robot also occupies this room; he cannot move from the room until both lights are removed. Wait until the robot has moved into the corner where the heads came from, and then enter the room.

The robot will fire, but the shots will rebound and kill him. He will leave a key to the last door which when opened completes the game.

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The CHEAP SEATS

Nothing beats a bit of bargain hunting after Christmas, especially when you're almost completely out of cash, says Tina Hackett

Street Fighter II
US Gold • £14.99

GAMER GOLD



Bernard Manning takes on Boy George

This is a game that needs no introduction from me. Unless you've been kidnapped by aliens from outer space then there is no way you could have missed all the publicity and hype surrounding this game. And as if you thought it couldn't get any better those nice chappies at US Gold have released it on budget.

Stunning graphics coupled with great playability make for a great game. The soundtrack is good, as is the choice of options. The two-player mode works brilliantly and with the different levels of difficulty to choose from you've certainly got a challenge.

However there are a few grumbles. For instance, the disk accessing can get to be a real pain and it plays slower and not as well as the arcade version, but this is only to be expected.

OK, so maybe I'm just being pedantic and so maybe it's not as good as Body Blows Galactic, but who am I to judge? Besides at this bargain of a price, who could refuse?



90%

Silly Putty
Gremlin • £9.99

GAMER GOLD



Billy Putty is being a silly sausage isn't he boys and girls?

Well, needless to say I was slightly sceptical when I first heard the concept behind Silly Putty. I mean how much fun can you possibly have with a small round blob? However, I was rather impressed with this little budget offering from Gremlin.

As a combination between a puzzler and a platformer, the aim of the game is to protect your putty-type friends from the evil doers Dazzledaze and Dweezil who intend to ship them off to Earth to be turned into bubblegum.

As Billy Putty, you can be aided by the Bots (friendly aliens from the planet Zid) but unfortunately they have been turned into ice blocks. Confused? You will be!

So now you have to rescue them and take them to places of safety. But watch you don't exceed your time limit, and keep an eye open for baddies such as Custard Men and Snot Goblins (ooh, nice!)

How can you possibly compete against all of this? Well luckily you can transform into different shapes and bounce, melt and inflate to your heart's content, being the putty-type creature you are.

This game becomes rather addictive and once you have mastered the controls to carry out the range of movements Putty can do, it's a great game.

It is nice and witty and the humorous sound effects and bright, colourful graphics should put a smile on the most miserable of faces.



88%

Torvak the Warrior
Corkers • £9.99



One thrust from his big chopper- ooh, the very thought makes my eyes smart

Now here's a game I hate almost as much as I hate Macauley Culkin.

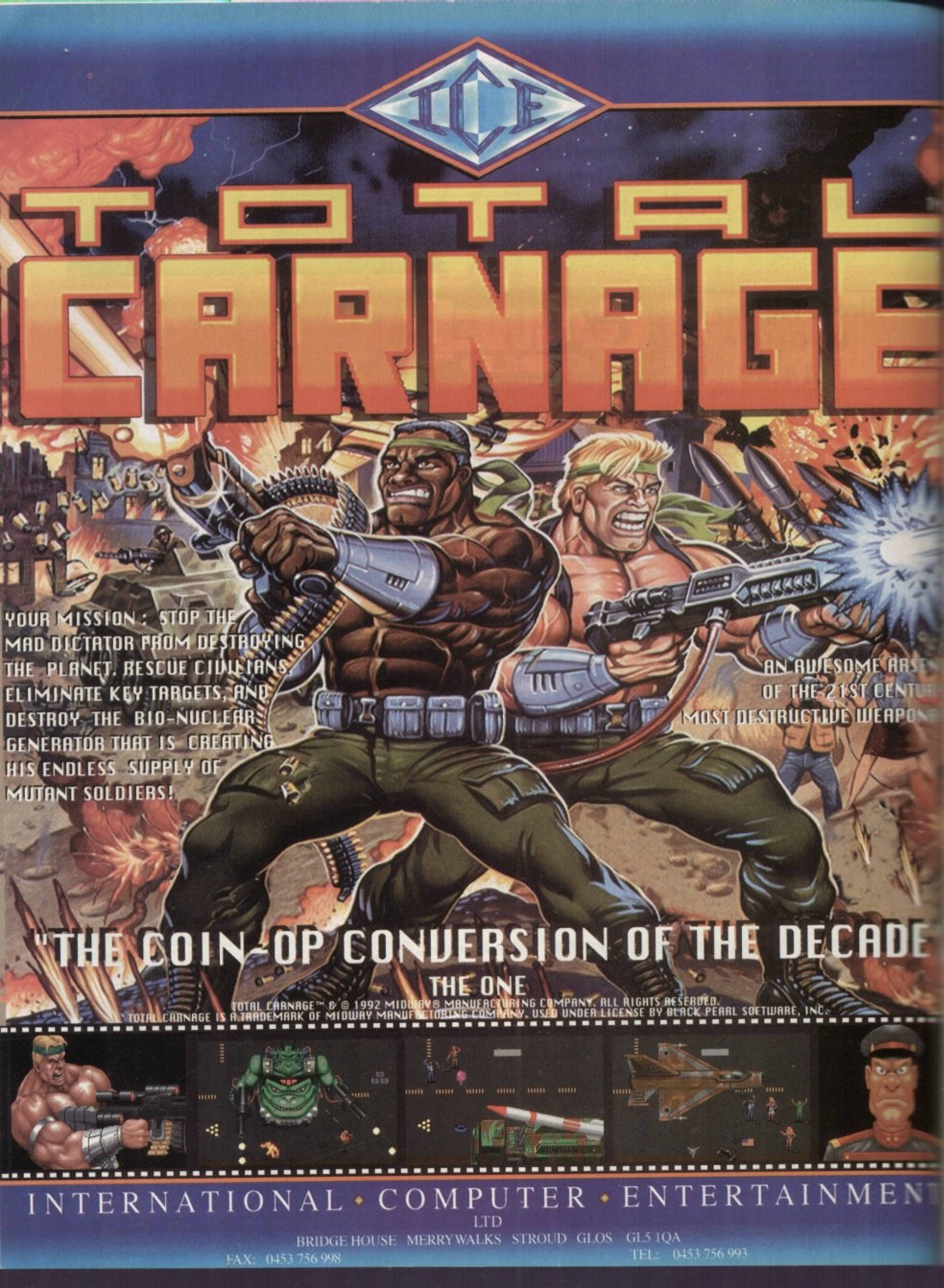
Boring gameplay, boring graphics and as for the music – well I'd rather listen to Mr Blobbys' hit single. In fact, this game is more disappointing than continually getting the orange creams in a packet of Revels.

You, as Torvak The Warrior, have to overcome five different levels, defeating the Giant Maggots, winged Dragon Bats and Swamp Monsters with your big weapon. However, the weapons are ineffective, even against the simplest of baddies and as for the helpful bonuses (such as Magic and Energy Orbs)... I think not.

Sorry I can't sound more positive about this one but it really is rubbish. Pass me the Pooper Scooper, please.



49%

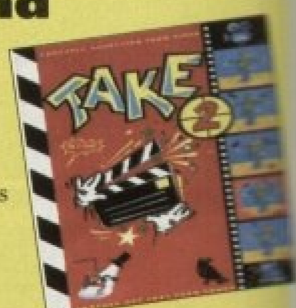

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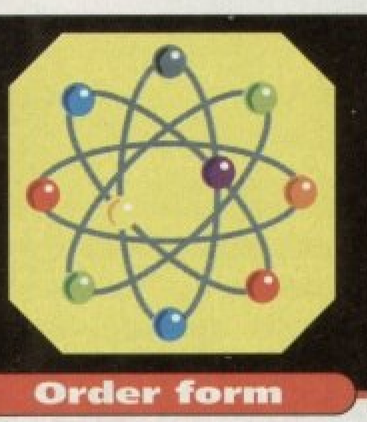
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AMIGA insight

Expert views on the latest applications

Graphics

As promised, in this issue we are going to examine a system which allows us to use the Amiga's Intuition graphics and interactive interface from within ARexx.

You probably already know that ARexx does not have any direct graphical interface support, and all such support must be provided by third party add-ons – usually in the form of a special ARexx library.

Several such products are available, and the one we examine here, RexxARPLib.library should be obtainable from any good PD library. Make sure you get v3.0, especially if you are working with WB 2.0 or above.

My aim here is not simply to give a few examples of how to use this library, but also to convey the "flavour" of the system, so that you can see if it suits your needs.

I assume that you have some working knowledge of ARexx, or at least some programming background, and the ability to pick up facts as you go along.

At this stage I must (by the way of caution) say a few words about graphical commands in any programming language. Essentially, any language that provides graphical commands makes a compromise between ease of use and flexibility.

On the one hand it can keep the commands as simple as possible, so that the user has most of the basic operations available; on the other hand, it can allow the user to exploit the system possibilities to their full extent.

In the first case users will be limited whenever they try to do something that goes a bit beyond the bare-bones basics; in the second case, they will have to learn not only the language itself, but also all the programming intricacies of the system's graphic interface!

This can be quite complicated if you want to use a Graphical User Interface (GUI) that receives input from the mouse and so on, as well as creating graphics.

Broadly speaking, there are two levels of graphic programming, a bit like there are two kinds of languages, high and low level. (You can do many more tricks with assembler than with Basic, but you really have to work at it.)

Essentially, the languages that provide ready-made graphic interface commands shield the user from the system intricacies by "packaging" the system-level calls into those instructions that are most likely to be needed, eg OpenWindow() or DrawCircle().

Languages that allow full control over a system graphic interface (such as the Amiga's Intuition) merely provide a method of hooking into the system library routines, quite independently of the programming languages themselves.

It is the user's responsibility to call these routines properly and to ensure that their rules are observed. In order to do this, you have to learn what the rules are in the first place. This can be almost as much work as learning the language itself.

On the other hand, if you know how to use a system library, you can call it and use it from any language that has a system interface, whether that is C, Assembler, Modula-2, or Basic. Using special libraries (not RexxARPLib.library), it is even possible to call them directly from ARexx.

The ARexx graphic utility that we will be looking at today provides the best of both worlds, by shielding the user from some of the messier system requirements, while at the same time maintaining a fair amount of similarity to the original system library.

There are two advantages to this: Only a little flexibility is lost, and, should users want to advance to more "real" system programming later on, they will not find themselves totally clueless, or starting from scratch; a fair amount of material will look familiar. Suggestions on how to proceed further appear at the end of the article.

I must also say that if after studying the documentation, the examples, and perhaps some books you still find this utility too difficult to use, then system programming is probably not for you. Sorry folks, but you are unlikely to find anything much simpler that is half as useful!

If this is the case, and you still want to program, try using simple languages with ready-made graphic commands (like some Basics), or graphic program-builders, such as CanDo, that also have the advantage of ARexx support.

We will now briefly look at how RexxARPLib.library gives us access to the system's graphics. In Amiga programming, when you want to open a window you do so by initialising a whole lot of data, opening a screen if one is not open, and then calling an Intuition function called OpenWindow().

This window will have (among many other things) a RastPort, which, roughly speaking, is the area you draw in, and a "message port" at which the user can check if any events like mouse clicks, menu selections, and so on have occurred. The above is quite an over-simplification, but it will help you get the general idea.

A programmer wanting to draw or write in the window calls special system functions that use the rastPort's address as one of their parameters. To monitor the user input, the programmer would set up a loop that kept checking the window's user message port which we just mentioned.

However, ARexx on its own does not allow the user to call the system libraries which open windows or draw graphics and so on. RexxARPLib uses an interesting system to get around this. The library provides a special function called CreateHost(hostname,nport), which sets up an autonomous little program (the host), which handles these calls automatically.

The extra advantage of this is that you do not have to worry about any of the initialisations – the host does them automatically too. We will see what the parameters (hostname,nport) mean in a minute.

There must be at least one host for every window that you want to open and it must run asynchronously. This means that the program must be run independently inside the Amiga multitasking environment. Again, we will see why when we look at the parameters. To run a program asynchronously, you must either run the command:

```
rx "call CreateHost(hostname,nport)"
```

from its own shell window, or, if you have it as part of the program itself, you must launch it with a line like:

```
ADDRESS COMMAND run rx '22'x"Call
CreateHost(hostname,nport)"
```

Note the '22'x (quote), which ensures the correct form, sine the quote before Call is lost during the concatenation.

You cannot just call the function on its own as part of your

AREXX made easy

Even experienced ARexx programmers baulk at attempting to mix ARexx with graphics, but it needn't be too difficult, as Alex Gian explains

program, because it will not return a value until its window is closed, and all its graphics are lost... and we haven't even opened the window yet!

This is why this function must run separately. Once the "host" is running you can open a window very simply by making a call like:

```
OpenWindow(hostname,a1,a2,...a7)
```

The parameters a1-a7 give information on the size, position and appearance of the window. Once the window is open, any of the graphic drawing calls, such as DrawCircle(hostname,x,y,radius), will be drawn in our host's window.

This brings us back to our parameters "hostname" and "nport". These are the names of two ARexx ports set up by the host. The first port (hostname) receives the graphics commands from your main graphics program.

It is not necessary for you to know that the commands are being sent to the ARexx port of a semi-autonomous little unit, but it can be useful.

For instance, if your graphics program crashes, and you are a left with a hanging window that you do not want, you can get rid of the window and free all its resources with the command:

```
rx "ADDRESS hostname Exit
```

which is the same as calling the function Exit(hostname) directly from your main program.

The use of "nport" is more subtle. While you do not need to know anything about "hostname" in order to create graphics, you must know quite a bit about the "nport" before you can receive information about window events like mouse clicks and mouse movements, menu selections and so on. RexxARPLib uses this port as a sort of duplicate port to the host window's own user port, in order to notify you of events that are being recorded at the user port.



The events at the "notify" port will be reported as simple ARexx strings, and are therefore much easier for you to process than system messages from the "real" user message port.

There are certain rules to be followed when obtaining messages from Amiga ports. When a message arrives it must be copied (for future use) and replied to as quickly as possible, in order not to slow down the multitasking system.

The functions to do this are supplied in the "rexxsupport" library, which is part of the ARexx distribution, and should be in your libs: drawer. We cannot go into detail here (we have looked at this subject in the past, but you should read at least some documentation on how this works before trying it. Looking at the examples supplied with RexxARPLib (or even copying them outright) will also give you some insight. Here you are bordering very much on the realm of real Amiga system programming.

This demonstrates the creation of a simple graphic using RexxARPLib. It does not report any events happening at the window – it only draws a picture Look at Figure I for the listing

This gives you some idea of the use of this library. In the next issue we will analyse an example that also receives mouse-events, as well as discussing some of the limitations of this system, so be sure to have a copy of RexxARPlib.library (v.3) by then. We will also be looking at some other exciting ARexx products.

Of course, a simple system like this cannot hope to provide the advanced tools of a program like DeluxePaint, but it also has its strong points, especially in repetitive work.

Try doing our simple graphic on DPaint by hand! In fact, how many of you have wondered why DPaint has no ARexx port? As a matter of fact, there is a way to get programs with no ARexx interface to run under ARexx control, but that will have to be our subject another time.

With ARexx and a few suitable libraries, you can experiment easily with the Amiga system without resorting to a compiler.

```
/* Square.rexx */
ADDRESS COMMAND run rx '22'x || "callCreateHost('Host','Unused')"
ADDRESS COMMAND 'WaitForPort Host'
width = 440 ; height = 220
flags = 'WINDOWDRAG+WINDOWDEPTH'
Call OpenWindow('Host',20,20,width,height,,flags,'The Square Vanishes')
/* the initial square */
pt.1.x=0 ; pt.1.y=1 ; pt.2.x=1 ; pt.2.y=0
pt.3.x=0 ; pt.3.y=-1 ; pt.4.x=-1 ; pt.4.y=0
scdown = 0.9
DO i = 1 TO 50
  Call SetAPen('Host',i)
  /* Calculate smaller square */
  pt.5.x = pt.1.x ; pt.5.y = pt.1.y
  DO n = 1 TO 4
   next=n+1
   pt.n.x = pt.next.x   scdown * (pt.next.x-pt.n.x)
   pt.n.y = pt.next.y   scdown * (pt.next.y-pt.n.y)
   PARSE VALUE Convert(pt.n.x, pt.n.y ) WITH px.n.x px.n.y
   END
  /* Draw the square */
  Move('Host',px.1.x,px.1.y)
  AreaDraw('Host',px.2.x,px.2.y)
  AreaDraw('Host',px.3.x,px.3.y)
  AreaDraw('Host',px.4.x,px.4.y)
  AreaDraw('Host',px.1.x,px.1.y)
  AreaEnd('Host')
  END
Call Exit('Host') ; EXIT
/* convert (x,y) coordinate to pixel */
Convert: PROCEDURE EXPOSE height width
x = width*(1+arg(1))/2
y = height*(1-arg(2))/2
RETURN x y
```

Figure I

Future steps

If you do try experimenting with this library, and you find it useful but would like something more powerful, then I suggest trying the apig.library and rxgen.library.

The former does very little to protect you from the system, but is very flexible. The latter does not protect you at all – it's just you and the "guru". More power than that, you will only find in your assembler or compiler.

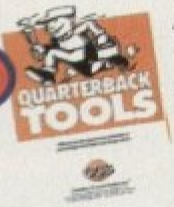
There are several books on the Amiga system. You should be aware that most of them give their examples in C, so the ability at least to read C is a strong advantage.

Other than the official RKM manuals, I would recommend a book like *Mapping the Amiga* or P Overaa's excellent *Mastering Amiga System*, but there are several good books out there – check your public library first. I would also mention the Amiga C Club's excellent tutorial, available for the price of a few PD disks.

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Everyone is organised and poised for the first day of shooting – crew and cast have arranged their time around your schedule. There's a buzz of excitement in the air as rehearsals and last minute details are sorted out.

The next step is working through the script with the actors. Rehearsals are essential for both director and performers alike, to lift the words off the page and get them moving in the way they will eventually to be seen on the screen. Many films made in Hollywood don't have rehearsals because hiring the actor for the extra time costs too much and the lack of understanding of a usual dodgy script to begin with glares at you from the screen.

As a result, unless the performers are very experienced and can find the subtext (what's really being said in a scene) from reading cold straight off a script without running through it properly several times, the actual shoot will most likely be delayed through uncertainty, drying up with lines and the performers making decisions with the script that are predictable, unsurprising and at worst, wooden to watch.

Set up the rehearsal area to be as close as possible to the space they will be using during the actual shooting and run through the scene. Working together and going through the script, making decisions concerning what each scene is about and how lines are going to be said, will produce a situation which breeds both confidence and understanding in the actors and director.

PEFORMANCE

One of the most important rules to remember is never to push for the exact performance you want to see in front of the camera – it may well mean that by the time the scene is played out for real, the players will have reached their peak and lost the spark for a particular scene.

While directing actors is very much a two-way street, at the end of the day it must come down to the film being made and knowing when to say "enough talk, let's do it".

With the cast finely tuned and the crew ready to burst onto the set, the big day arrives where all your hard work and preparation will be put into motion. Always go over the scenes to be shot the night before to prepare yourself for the shoot the following day. Constant reappraisal of your work is healthy for "programming" your subconscious so that answers to un-thought of questions will arise as if by magic on the day.

Set a production meeting for first thing in the morning to lay out what is going to be done during the day and to see if everyone is focused together as a team – and that no problems may have arisen at the last moment.

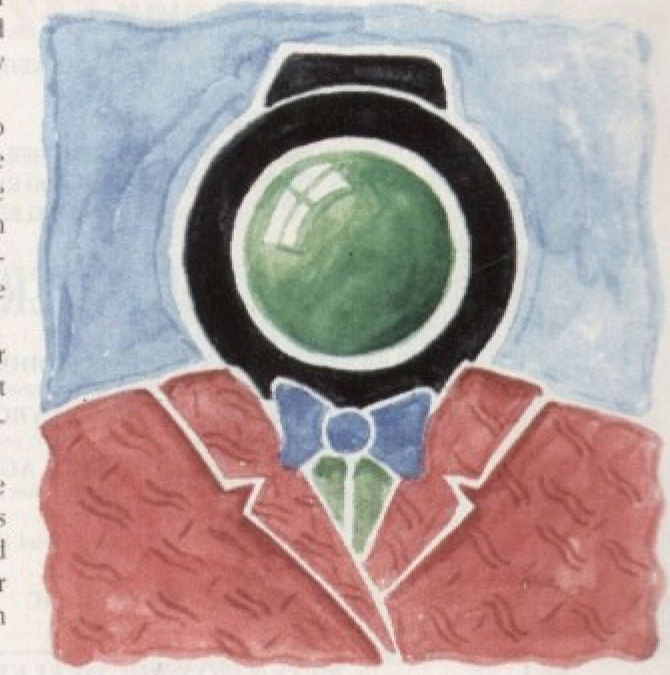
Head out to the first location and tell everyone the first shot to be taken. Give a brief description of the kind of image you want and the lighting to go with it. Then leave them to it and inform your actors what lines and shots are up next so that they know exactly what is going on to save any confusion later.

It's common mistake to become so involved with the technical side that the actors often end up being treated as a piece of equipment and little else. Treat them with the respect they deserve and the end performance will be better because they'll care about what they're doing.

Throughout the shoot, make sure that your PA (production assistant) keeps in constant contact tallying the times and locations, giving a clear idea of how long you have left.

An essential piece of paperwork is the logging sheet where the start and end times of a shot with a short description are marked for each take. This makes post-production far easier in the editing suite, saving time and in some cases, money.

Above all, remember never to look indecisive or uncertain – make a decision, good or bad, to get the film made, and stick to it.



When the big day arrives

...or what to do in the rehearsal room and on the set in the fourth part of Adam Phillips's video making extravaganza

In a word...

Here's a list of the most frequently used phrases and words on the set in chronological order:

"Quiet please!" .... Designed to be said either quietly or as loudly as needed. Follow this with...

"Roll tape" .... to the sound recordist/camera operator. They'll press the record button to begin the tape and respond with...

"Speed" .... when the tape has had time to speed up fully (5-10 seconds) and to give the editor space to breath in the editing suite. Once done, the director cries...

"Mark it" .... and the clapper person rushes in and marks the shot with the scene and shot number including which take it is. This is very important for editing purposes to help with syncing and finding the relevant shots off the logging sheets. Once done, the director shouts, cries or weeps...

"Action!" .... and the shot begins. When done...

"Cut" .... brings everything to a halt and everyone relaxes until the director calls...

"Spot check, please" .... and the sound recordist/camera operator looks at the take to check for sound or picture drop out which will turn out either "positive" or "negative"

"Let's go for another take" ..decides the director and the process begins all over again...

A classic cock-up

Paul Austin steps onto the soap box for the last time with a guide to song construction

Modern music has been revolutionised by the computer and sequencer combination, but as ever there's a price to pay for the added convenience. Alas the price all too often remains unnoticed by the novice, resulting in the inevitable transformation of inspired ideas into bland end results.

The problem is caused by the very convenience that's brought about the sequencing explosion. All too often roles are reversed between man and machine as the human element mutates into the automated bit.

As the sequencing carrot of "cut and paste" dangles ever more invitingly before the eyes of the beginner, the creative spirit slowly ebbs away.

By default, machines – no matter how complex – always lean towards uniformity. However, this adhesion to rules and formal structure isn't only restricted to computers, it can also happen to humans...

A prime example are the many classically trained musicians, who although technically spectacular in their implementation often lack for a creative flame, extinguished by the musical structure ingrained during the learning process.

After many years as part of the Transit van set, playing in dives and rehearsing in countless Scout huts, church halls and assorted back bedrooms among a mixture of the classically trained and the self taught, this insistence on structure becomes blindingly obvious during the inevitable end of session jam.

Invariably in the starring role during rehearsed material, the classical elements usual sink into the background during the free form of a jam.

The question is: Why should the best musicians in the room pale so badly in such circumstances? The answer is simple: Rigid musical thought always looks for the correct way to progress, rather than the often inspired route chosen by the blissfully ignorant members of the "suck it and see" fraternity.

PROGRESSION

While emotion and good old guesswork drives the self taught from one chord progression to the next, the classically trained are busy looking for the right notes, rather than the inspired.

The end result is that the classical types are usually happier playing the works of a composer rather than writing their own material. A quick glance at the popular – and not so popular – charts stands as a glowing testament to that.

A similar problem afflicts a lot of computer-generated music as the uniformity and adhesion to a format means the inspired and accidental are often absorbed by the constriction of the "cut and paste".

As a result, the battle against blandness has to be fought every time you turn on the machine. In my humble opinion music is, and always should be, an artform, an area in which the challenge is to convey the emotions of the moment and the inspiration they inspire.

This is where the real battle between man and machine takes place. No matter how clever software becomes, machines will never feel the emotions that make good music great.

It's true that hours and sometimes days can be saved by sequencing but in order to create anything other than lift music you must remain the master and not simply the slave.

OK, after insulting almost everyone who's ever played an instrument – electronic or otherwise – it's time for Austin's patented guide to popular music.

The first job is to throw away any preconceptions that the machine will in some way write the music for you. As a result, before even touching the record button it's wise to have a firm – or at least firmish – idea of how the piece will appear in its final form. At this point yet another technological fantasy can hit the bricks, namely the paperless environment. A decent Biro is just as important as any part of your set-up and during the planning stage it's vital.



Assuming you're now armed with pen and paper it's time to turn on your synth, select your favourite voice and start work on the hook or key melody. Depending on your prowess on the keyboard, this can be as simple or complex as you wish.

Now before an increasingly itchy finger reaches for the Record, write down the key notes or chords and start looking for a link to the next section whether it be a verse, chorus, middle eight, intro, out-tro or anything else that tickles your particular ivories.

It's very important that the various elements flow together prior to recording individual sections. All to often if you simply charge headlong into a piece thereby creating finished individual sections before contemplating what will follow, the end results will suffer as compromise slowly creeps in as you attempt to join two basically incompatible elements.

Once all the basics are in place you can finally begin the recording process, although if you're wrestling with the eternal question "is this a classic or just a load of cobblers?" a top tip is to have an early night and return refreshed in the morning.

If in the cold light of day you can't remember a single note, I'm afraid your worst suspicions are probably correct and your would-be masterpiece is indeed complete crap!

Assuming that you've remembered every note, the construction process can begin. There are basically two routes available. Firstly, you can select the required instruments and work on the piece section by section to assemble the finished product. To be honest this is probably the fastest way to work, but it doesn't lend itself to accidental inspiration very easily.

METRONOME

The second option is to build the entire piece using the basic key notes with perhaps a metronome as an additional guide. If at all possible, avoid designing the drum track until the major chords, bass lines and accompaniment are in place.

This isn't because the drums are any less important than the rest of the production – in fact quite the reverse. If there's one element of sequencer generated music that suffers from the "cut and paste" more than any other it's the drum track.

Due to the uniform nature of drums and percussion they're the first to fall foul of blanditis. As a result, if they're left until later in the production the accompanying music isn't forced to pander to an invariably monotonous cut and paste drum special.

Equally important is the fact that adding the drums and percussion later means you're forced to think more along the lines of a real drummer and attempt to tailor the drums to the track rather than the reverse.

Well, alas that's all that space will allow, so I'm afraid I'll have to curtail this particular rant and pass the music insight into the capable hands of Paul Overaa – so feel free to send all hate mail to him. Thank you, and good night.

CompuSpend?

Comms expert Phil South joins CompuServe, and wonders if he's doing the right thing

The typical reaction of a comms head when you say you've just joined CompuServe is one of sucking his cheeks in like a man estimating your double glazing. "Phew, that's going to cost you a bit, isn't it?"

This is a classic response, and one which is I think a little bit out of date. There are benefits, huge ones too, to being on CompuServe, but there are some drawbacks.

One is cost, certainly, another is the sheer complexity of the thing, and one is a sort of navigational problem. CompuServe is good, certainly, but it's hard to use, and not the most up-to-date piece of kit on the airwaves, as I'll explain in a minute.

Cost used to be the only issue as far as I was concerned, and that's actually the first thing that surprised me about the new pricing strategy. One of the previous reasons I never tried to get an account is the fact you need a credit card to subscribe.

I just got one so that removed that little obstacle. Everyone I should think has been sent one of those little info booklets with a special log-in number and agreement number, password and the like. I simply dug out one of those and checked out the details.

CompuServe is essentially an American system, so all the money you spend on-line is in dollars. The Standard Rate is $8.95 (£5.90) a month, and for this you are granted free access to all the basic services, like UK and World news and sport, weather maps and reports, electronic mail, and access to Grolier's Encyclopaedia, computer news, Home Shopping, HealthNet, airline hotel and car hire information, Roger Ebert's Movie Reviews, on-line games, Classified ads and various other member services. Other than that you have to pay for "extended" or "premium" services. At 9,600 baud the pricing for extended and premium services is $16 (£10.60) per hour. Then on top of that you cop the comms surcharge depending on how you reach CompuServe. I dial up CompuServe direct in Bristol, although there are local nodes all over the place.

Connecting direct to CompuServe costs $7.00 (£4.60) per hour at what they call Prime Time between 8am and 7pm, and at weekends or between 7pm-8am weekdays it's free.

There is also an alternative plan for users who aren't going to be around very much, which only charges you $2.50 (£1.60) per month, but you cop a bigger charge for all the services, regardless of if they are basic, extended or premium.

At 9,600 baud this is a whopping $22.80 (£15.20) per hour. To get this in perspective, you are not going to go on CompuServe for hours at a time.

The system is very complicated to use. First you have a problem with baud rates and protocols. I was told by my booklet to set my settings to 7E1 and off we go. It turns out you should change your settings to 8N1 again after you've logged on for the first time, but nobody told me that. Secondly, you may have a bit of trouble with up and download protocols. CompuServe have seen fit to run at a top speed of 9,600 baud, and chosen to ignore the protocol used by 80 per cent of the civilised world, ie. ZModem.

This means that you are restricted to Compuserve-B, which I can't get to work at all, and XModem and YModem, both of which work at truly risible transfer rates.

This may be a problem you can solve, but so far I'm not having any luck. At the present moment downloads are slow and difficult, compared to the fast downloads I get at 14,400.

This may seem like a small problem to users of 2,400 modems, who not only won't notice any difference, but will also get cheaper on-line time on CompuServe.



It may sound like I'm a bit down on CompuServe – well I'm not. It's a massive Corporation, not a single sysop, so changes are slow in coming. We still have the long tedious ID numbers instead of easy to remember handles, we still have charge upon charge per hour. We also still have no ZModem.

But in spite of all of these criticisms it remains a huge source of information and files, if you can get them. It's a point of contact with hundreds of thousands of people, and companies too. It's like CIX amplified by about 1,000 times.

Is it worth it? Well I haven't got a bill yet, but I'm sure it is. Some people tell me that the Alternative pricing plan is better if you don't intend being on CompuServe all the time, and I'm sure that's true. Unless they get ZModem and 14,400 baud real soon, I think I'll be nipping on only once in a while.

Read my lips

The niggles added to the problem of the system being so large, so is the solution an off-line reader? Well the best you can do on the Amiga is a terrible program called Autopilot, which only works in interlace mode, and due to the way CompuServe works simple has to read through and capture all the messages the same way you would if you were on-line.

It's a dreadful state of affairs, especially when you've been pampered by having a good clean system like CIX to use for the last five years or so. The CIX and Nicola combination is perfect, and allows you a lot of freedom to use the CIX system as you please. Autopilot is as bewildering as the CompuServe interface itself.



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Fade to red

Phil South examines fading and appearing commands for graphics screens, plus a look at Totally Amos issue 13.

Fade and Appear are tricky little devils to control, unless you know the right parameters with which to control them. I've evolved these little procs to do all the work for me.

The Appear proc is the more complex. Appear is an unpredictable command, and the best effects will only emerge after much toing and froing and bug testing. The proc goes like this:

```
Rem ** Appear **
Rem
Procedure _APPEAR[SRC,DST,FX]
   Appear SRC To DST,FX
End Proc
```

You have to seed it by something like:

```
_APPEAR[0,1,5]
```

with SRC being the source screen (in this case 0), DST being the destination screen (this one is 1), and finally FX the effect. I find that odd numbers work well, and you'll find this with a lot of Amos commands.

You have to input numbers divisible by a certain figure or the effects don't do what they should. I suppose you could call it a feature, but a cynic would call it a bug. Ouch, I know that's a naughty word in Amos circles, but true enough.

Anyway, Fade is a similar animal. The easy proc goes like this:

```
Rem ** Fade **
Rem
Procedure _FADE[SPEED]
   Fade SPEED
   Wait SPEED*15
End Proc
```

The fade happens no matter what else is going on, although if you do another screen op, or the fade is interrupted by something, you won't get a smooth result. Waiting is the best idea, and the formula for the best wait time is whatever the speed is multiplied by 15.

Fades can be used to good effect to bring up a screen or render it in a single colour, or indeed fade it to black. I find a good effect is to synchronise a sting on the soundtrack (an orchestral hit for example) with the appearance of a picture; just show it on the screen instantly by screen swapping.

Then as the note dies, fade the picture out. Then sting again and put up another picture, and then fade again, or fade to red, then fade to black.

Fading to a colour is a popular demo pastime, and you do it quite simply by adding a colour list to the end of the command:

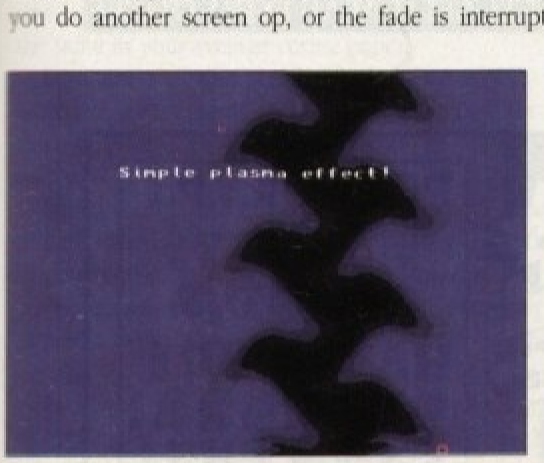
```
Fade 15,$100,$200,$300... etc
```

and any number of colours up to the amount allowed in the current screen mode.

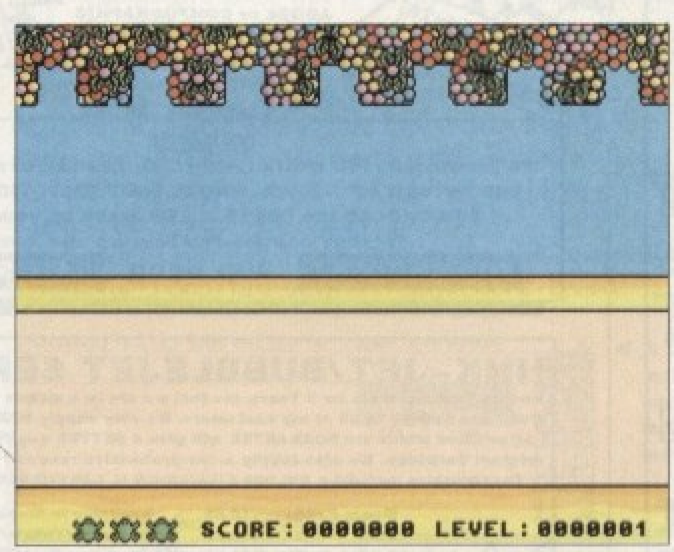


The idea for a title sequence for a Dracula game springs to mind. Titles flash onto the screen with a flash of a white screen, then the titles are there. Fade to black.

The main title, "Dracula Returns", is flashed up in white on the screen, which then fades to red... sinister, and really effective if teamed with the right music.



See what you can do with a little effort?



Frogger makes a comeback on Totally Amos



Flash and fade with Amos

Totally moved

I got a note from Anne Tucker to say that Amos PD Library and the *Totally Amos* disk magazine have moved. They've forsaken the hills of Wales for the plains of Essex, and the new address is Amos PD Library, 17 Wick Farm Road, St Lawrence Bay, Southminster CM0 7PF. The *Totally Amos* mag and Aaron Fothergill's Amos Club Newsletter are the two best sources of Amos info available in the UK, and should not be missed.

Issue 13 is out now, and it contains some really kickin' code, like the plasma effect I've been looking for for some time. Easy to do even in Easy Amos! Plus an example of a complete game, a frogger clone (barf) plus a really amazing starburst routine using AMAL, which any still shots just can't do any justice to.

Oh and there's a really odd maze game where you draw a maze and the computer calculates the shortest path through it. Nice algorithm, shame about the game.

Anyway it's all in *Totally Amos*, not to mention the reviews, graphics, hints and tips etc that you get as well. And all on disk, which is more than you can say for my stuff!

Write stuff

If you have an Amos question, then please write to Phil South, Amos Insight, Amiga Computing, Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP.

A little help from my friends

Ben Pointer on a nifty short-cut to incredibly professional looking documents

When you want a picture for your document you have two choices – draw one yourself or use clip art. Same with fonts, instead of having to design your own there are thousands of ready made ones you can use.

So what do you do when you need professional quality colour documents but can't afford, or have no need for, hundreds or thousands of copies to be reproduced?

Take a trip to a stationery shop of course and buy some pre-printed paper. Recently I had to produce an annual report and needed a bright and professional cover.

As I only needed 35 copies, to have them printed in colour was not cost effective so I investigated a range of pre-printed papers that are available from a Belgian company called DECAdry, better known for its press-on lettering products similar to those produced by Letraset.

On the DECAdry poster I was able to choose from as many as 150 different designs. These included graduated papers, an effect many try to reproduce on their home printers unsuccessfully because of the high resolution needed to print the hundreds of different shades. The DECAdry gradients are all linear, from dark to light down the page.

If you are looking to stand out in a crowd there are fluorescent colours, and as well as these general purpose papers there are many specialist designs in pastel colours so that text can be selectively placed on top of the colours.

You can choose from papers with themes like the written word, snowy landscapes, seaside landscapes, ballooning, communications, birthdays, children, sports, computing, and lots, lots more.

COPIER PAPER

The designs come in more than more one format. The basic one is an A4, single-sided design, on a paper weight of 80 gsm, the same as your average copier paper.

But there are other weights and sizes available, like 165 gsm, which is a stiff card, and A3 80 gsm, great for making eye-catching posters, provided your printer can print onto A3 paper of course.

Birthday cards and tri-fold brochures can be created using pre-printed materials. The cards from DECAdry come flattened, ready to put through your printer, and pre-scored so that folding them in the correct places is not a problem. There are about 30-40 different designs in the cards section and currently 12 tri-fold designs.

Pack sizes vary from 50 to 100 sheets depending on the weight of the material, and prices are very reasonable — 100 sheets of a patterned paper cost me just £4 on special.

There are some pitfalls you need to be aware of. Because you are printing onto colours you won't be to use typesetting effects where you have white showing through your text and pictures. Any text you place on the pre-printed paper will have to be a solid black.

If you use greys, because this shade is formed by black dots and white space, on pre-printed papers a colour will show through between the black dots. The amount of see-through will depend on the shade of grey you choose, dark greys will let less of the background through than lighter greys.

If you want to mix black text and white text then choose a design that contains a white section, like a graduated paper. With something like this you can have black text on the coloured section and use a outlined, white-filled text on the white section.

So before rushing out and buying the prettiest paper you set your eyes on, think about your design and the type of elements you want to put on to the page, and whether they are feasible on a pre-printed paper.

I've used pre-printed papers with inkjets and laser printers and the quality from both is very good. Because the home laser or inkjet printer can produce near typeset quality for text, when you combine it with a professional quality pre-printed paper you get a product that you can be justifiably proud of.

As a friend said when I first tried it: "Cor, Ben, that looks really professional!" I didn't have the guts to admit that I'd cheated.



Why do it?

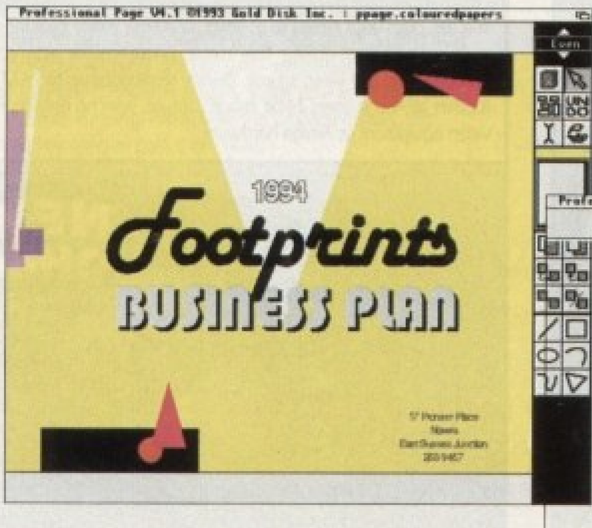
Take one picturesque image of the seaside painted in pretty pastels, add to it some appropriate text that goes with this idyllic image and you have a technique for producing professional quality work at very little cost.

You might, for example, use the picture of the seaside as a backdrop for a series of pieces of stationery for a local seaside restaurant or holiday village.

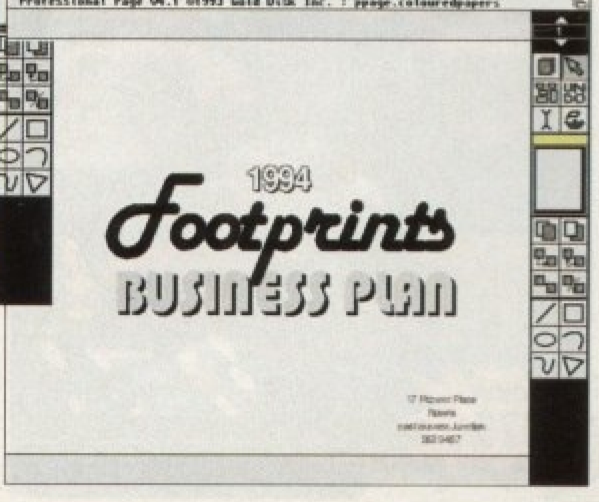
But instead of going to a firm of printers and having them produce several hundred copies of each different piece of stationery, at a substantial cost to your client, you can buy a pack of pre-printed sheets of the seaside and then use your own printer to add the text and graphics.

In this way the same seaside image could be used for many different pieces of stationery for the one client, and because you are doing the printing on your home printer you can quickly print as few or as many are as needed, thus cutting costs and wastage.

All that's needed is a good quality laser or inkjet mono printer.



◄ A trip to your local stationers will be rewarded with a selection of pre-printed papers which you can then overprint with your own text and design



A quick and unimaginative ► layout like this can be turned into something special by outputting onto pre-printed paper

ADI JUNIOR/FUN SCHOOL SPECIALS

From the makers of Fun School, these top-rated educational packages are just the ticket to give your child a flying start! Paint and Create exercises practical creative skills, Merlin Maths enthrals children while covering the basic skills, and Spelling Fair guides your child through the intricacies of basic grammar. ADI helps with Reading and Counting.



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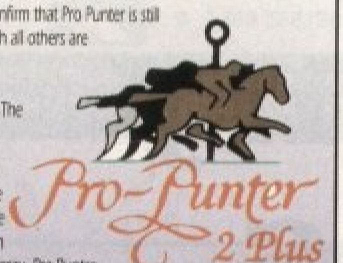
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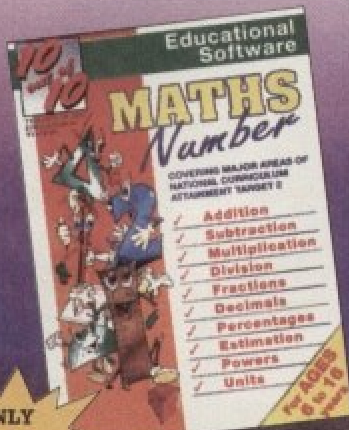
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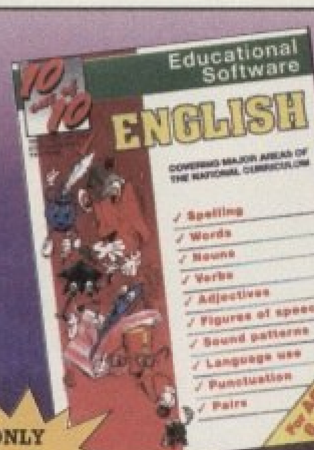
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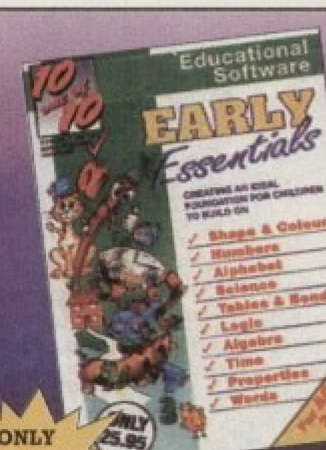
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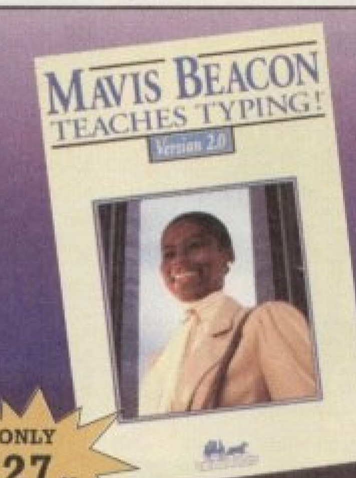


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Videomaster features a sound sampler as part of the hardware, though the software can be used with external sound samplers. This is supported by a full feature sound recording and editing program within the videomaster software. The Videomaster system also features a video sequencer.

The complete package contains the Videomaster video digitising and sound sampling hardware unit, TRI-Colour filters for colour camera use, comprehensive user guide and full system software.

Videomaster only works with Amiga 500 and 500 Plus models.



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The built in TRACKER program allows you to input sampled notes from the computer keyboard so that you can create your own melodies.

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The MINI MODULE enables samples to be played on all 4 audio channels from a MIDI keyboard, Drum Box or External Sequencer. (Midi Interface required).

Samples can now be stored on an edit list which allows rapid access direct from memory. A wide range of CONTROLLABLE effects (including novelties) can be added to the samples including Variable Delay, Variable Echo and Variable Synthesis.

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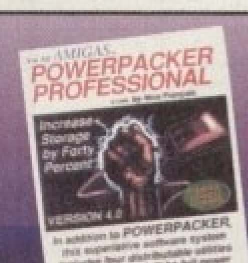


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At last from Microdeal comes the first ever low cost Stereo 16 Bit Sampler for the Amiga. Contains two 16 bit analog to digital/digital to analog convertors to allow stereo sound digitising. The system can record sound from suitable equipment such as CD players, cassette recorder or any 'AUX' or line level signal source via the stereo phone sockets provided. Stereo phono outputs are provided for connection to an amplifier or mixer. The hardware plugs into the serial and printer ports and so can be used with the whole Amiga range of computers. As if this is not enough, Clarity 16 also contains a Midi interface for use with a Midi keyboard or similar, which is compatible with major commercial software.



The Editor program provides the user with the ultimate in power and sophistication, packed with features which appear for the first time for any home computer. The fully multi-tasking, window styled editor allows individual samples to be loaded into the computer and edited separately.

1Mb Ram is recommended.

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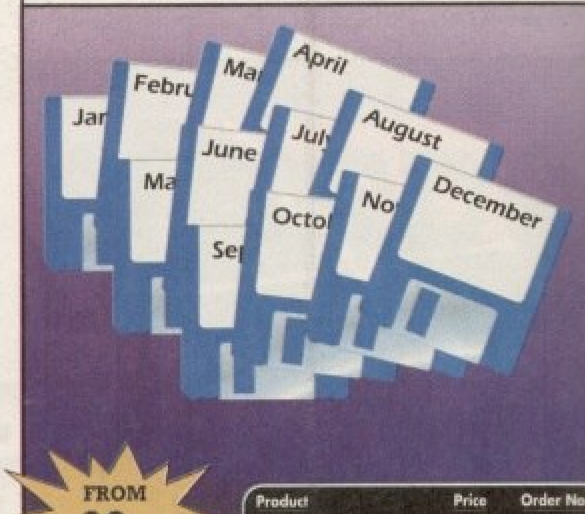


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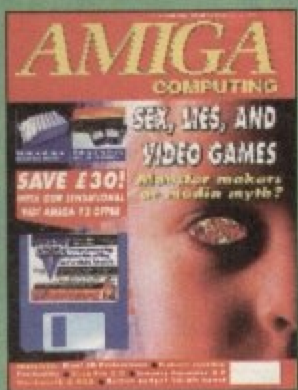
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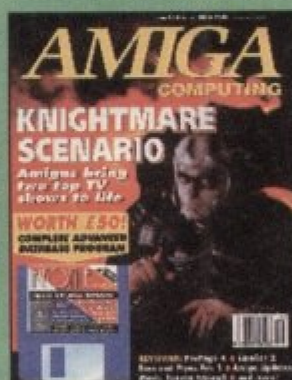
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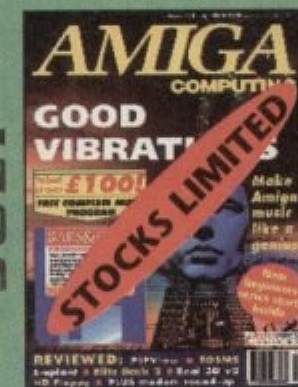
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JUNE



We go behind TV's role playing show - Knightmare. Guide to budget DTP software. Reviews of Big Alternative Scroller 2, ProPage 4, Bars and Pipes Pro 2 and Mavis Beacon Typing 2. ***ON DISK:*** Infofile, Scala HVT (save disabled) VALUED AT £50

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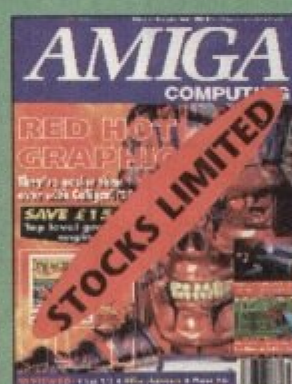
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AUGUST



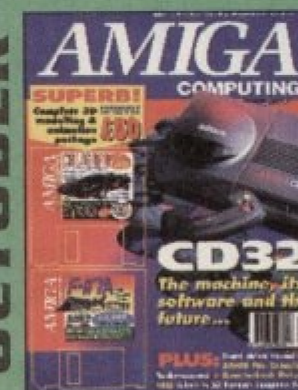
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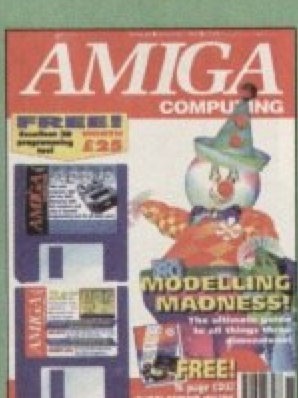
Caligari 24 reviewed. Survival guide to hard drives. Reviews of Phone Pak, VLab Y/C and Alfa Colour Hand Scanner. ***ON DISK:*** Image FX demo

OCTOBER



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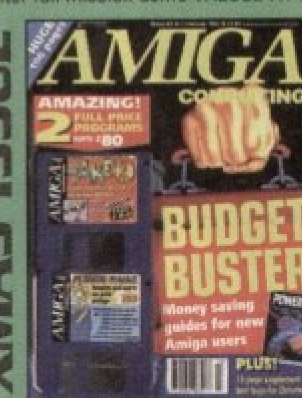
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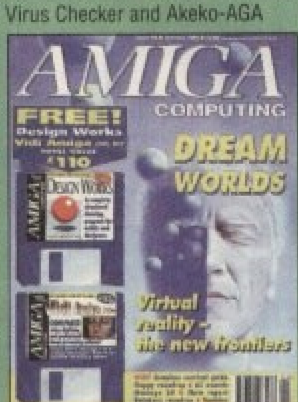
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XMAS ISSUE



Money saving guide for new Amiga users, Word Processor round-up, RAM expansion round-up, Survival guide to floppies. ***ON 2 DISKS:*** Take Two animation editor VALUED at £80, Fusion Paint VALUED at £30.

JANUARY



Virtual reality – the new frontiers, Samplers survival guide, Floppy round-up, AC awards, Montage 24, Show report, Database round-up, Paint package round-up. ***FREE 64 PAGE BOOK:*** All about the A1200. ***ON 2 DISKS:*** Design Works VALUED at £50, Vidi Amiga (12) RT Software.

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Educational memory game for four year olds or above
Supplier: First Computer Centre
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Price: £19.99

Can your child become the next Memory Man with the Amiga's help? Kim, a new educational game, certainly thinks so

Kim is taken from the children's party game and has been designed to teach memory, reading and word recognition skills through a memory game.

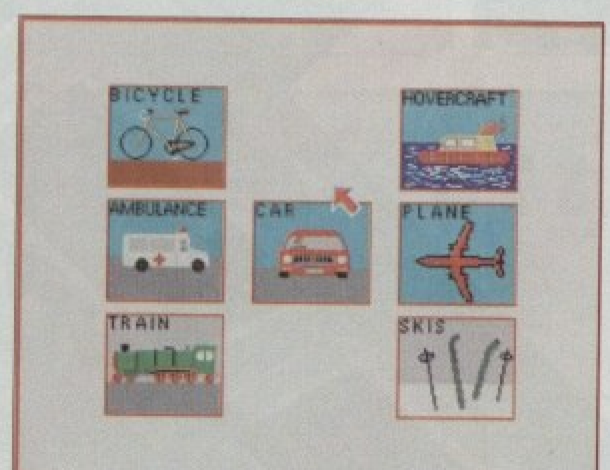
Aimed at four-year-olds or above, it teaches by selecting objects and then the player or team is given a set time to choose the objects they have just seen out of a screen-full of 20 pictures.

There are over 200 pictures and words in all to memorise from categories such as Animals, Travel, Clothes and Numbers. There are many objects built in but more can be added using any paint package which produces IFF output.

Users can alter the amount of objects to be memorised from one to ten and the amount of time to memorise them in can also be set from one up to twenty eight seconds. Whether the appropriate names or the pictures alone should be memorised can also be selected.

The player then clicks on the objects they think they have remembered and selects them by using the mouse pointer. They are told whether they are correct or not by right or wrong appearing in the corner of the box.

Scoring counts the number of correct items memorised and deducts marks for incorrect answers or "Monkey Marks" (as a Monkey can play by random guesses) and then multiplies by the time display. So the time taken to memorise their choices becomes important.



Memorise the seven different modes of transport



Can you remember which flags you've just seen out of this lot?



A clear, well set out options screen

As the game is aimed at the younger player (around four years and above) the ease of use is one of the most important features. This has been carefully considered for this product, such as the layout of the screens.

The options screen is colourful and well designed, and once a child has had the icons explained they should easily be able to handle the package. There have been some novel ideas added, for instance, the traffic light sequence to signal the start of the game.

Sampled speech has been used to give the player encouragement when they have selected their answers, for example "no, try again!" or "getting there!" and phrases like "that's a good score" will appear on the screen.

The way the scoring has been approached may be a little confusing and a more simplified version may well benefit the game, especially the way the two-player score is displayed which is in the form of a thermometer showing the running percentage marks. The educational value of this game will be quite high. It is helpful in learning in that it aids memory retention. The child also learns to make associations in order to help memorise the objects. They have to note subtle differences such as in the colour topics.

On a higher level the game should help with vocabulary and spellings. The child is active in learning rather than passively absorbing information and it is continually testing their skills while being fun.

Some of the nouns used are a little strange and may confuse, such as "Swimfins" refers to "Flippers" and "Kayak" being a "Canoe". More "everyday" nouns would be more beneficial to a younger player as it is not very consistent.

How long the game will amuse them will vary. It does lack variety after a while but the two-player feature will add interest and appeal to children's competitive nature. As will the Honours Board whereby playing a minimum of six rounds, their best six are then counted and, if a high score

Amiga Next Steps

Insider guide to the A1200
Author: Peter Fitzpatrick
Publisher: Bruce Smith Books
Phone: 0923 894355
Price: £14.95

The latest in Bruce Smith's range of insider guides takes the A1200 beginner from the basics as outlined in the book's predecessor, *Amiga A1200 Insider Guide*, to a point of some expertise in the machine and its operating system.

Twenty-two chapters cover a series of topics including AmigaDOS, printing, the contents of the Workbench disks, and even a bit of game playing, and precious little is left out.

Interspersed among the text are 26 insider guides, which are single page illustrations of operations such as changing preferences and backing up a hard drive.

Peter Fitzpatrick's style, like many journalists who write books (Peter was editor of an Acorn magazine) can at times be a little broken, but his instructions are given in plain, easy English uncluttered by jargonese, and most beginners should find the book a decent read.

In general, the level of complexity is set just

is achieved, will be put onto the Honours Board which can then be saved onto disk.

The option of being able to customise the game by making your own versions of the Topic Screens can prolong the lastability of the package. This can be done by loading them into a paint program and saving them in 16-colour IFF mode (however, you can not actually change the words, just the pictures).

Thankfully there is only one disk so the younger, less advanced player does not become confused with a lot of disk accessing. The colourful layout and wide choice of topics to choose from should also retain the interest.

This game should achieve what it sets out to do which is to educate while at the same time be entertaining. Children of all ages and intelligence will benefit from it as some of the topics are more advanced than others. They should enjoy the challenge of testing their memory, especially against friends.



Alfa Data optical pen mouse
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If most mouse reviewers came clean they'd admit that the average test consists of popping out their favourite rodent for ten minutes, followed by a quick twiddle with the review model, then straight back to their old flame to write the review. Not one to break from tradition, I was fully expecting to follow this tried and tested formula to the letter. But strangely enough here I am almost three days later still banging out copy, exiting graphics and testing assorted software with the optical. This is even more amazing considering the long standing relationship between myself and my first love, the Alfa Data Mega Mouse. However I must admit my affections are now directed firmly towards to this rather bizarre-looking implement.

But having said that it must be stressed my enthusiasm is probably due to the artistic benefits which the improved feel of the stylus can supply.

As for more mundane pastimes such as word processing and general day-to-day productivity I must admit a standard mouse is probably a more efficient choice.

It's not that the stylus is bad for that sort of work, it simply isn't as effective for general purpose cut and paste operations.

ALTERNATING

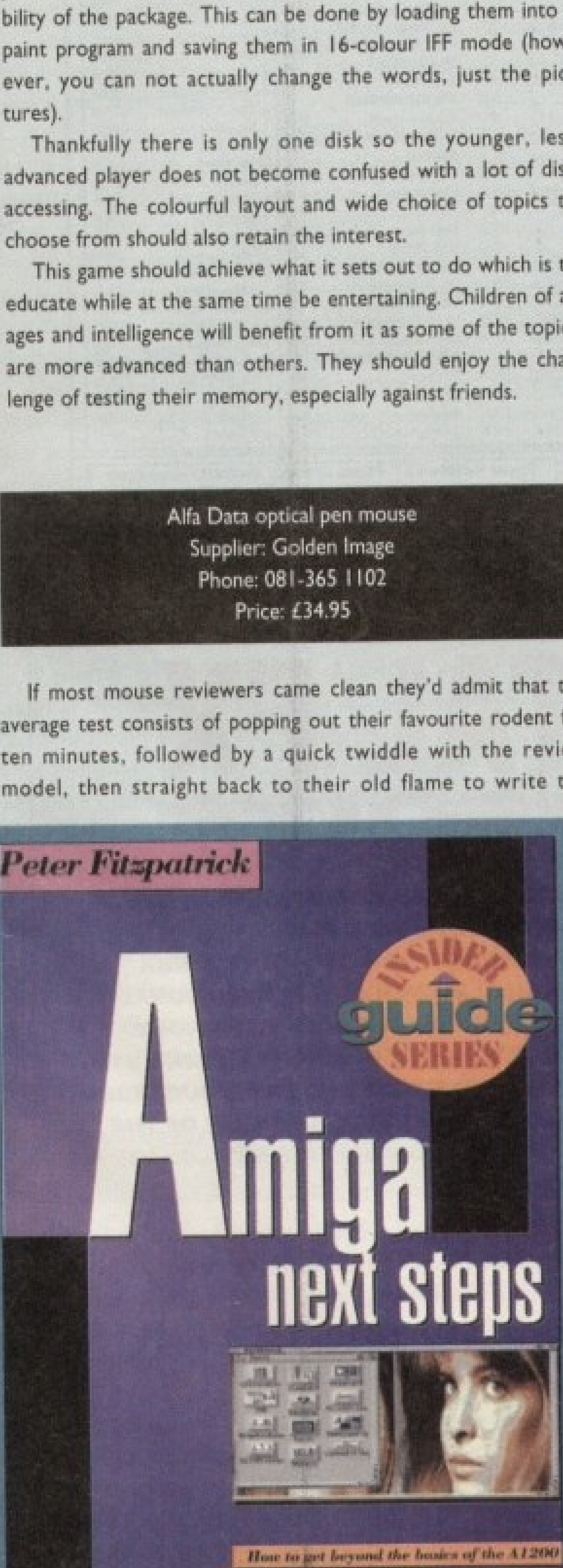
The main reason for this is the constant alternation between keys and mouse, which in the case of the stylus means you're constantly forced to down tools and return to the keyboard to type.

This constant need to pick up and drop the stylus is my only complaint. Why not use the top left of the mouse mat – which at present is wasted on a rather silly logo – to provide some form of holder for the stylus while you're busy at the keyboard? The answer... No reason whatsoever!

As for accuracy the stylus rates alongside any of its optical counterparts, and of course because there are no moving parts it glides across the mat with consummate ease.

Aside from the aforementioned mouse mat you also receive not two but three micro-switched buttons which wait attentively under your index finger.

In short I'm impressed, and if you're an artist who longs to translate their freehand skills onto the big screen it's the next best thing to a pressure-sensitive graphics tablet. Basically if you've got the cash and the inclination it's worth ever penny. Get one you won't regret it...



right, even if coverage of so wide an area as "the A1200" means that in places the author is forced to assume his readers are following him.

A very positive note in the book's favour is that it covers many practical tasks and offers hints on how to accomplish them. Too many tutorial books, especially those with sections on AmigaDOS, concentrate on tricks with script files and commands which most users will never use or need rather than on the practicalities of rescuing data from a floppy or backing up a hard drive.

Not all the advice is good, however, and the blasé way in which the author tells us that hard drives can be reformatted if they develop minor errors is a little discomforting.

On a brighter note, there is a sterling section just prior to this on the rigours of expelling coffee from a drowning keyboard, something in which we at *AC* have had plenty of practice.

Other parts of the book could have done with a little more information, and you can find the odd slip here and there. For example, Insider Guide No 24 gives advice on changing the boot-up screen mode to enable old games to run, but doesn't mention disabling CPU caches or using one of the many degrader-style PD programs.

This is being a bit picky, though, because few manuals would have bothered with games players in the first place and the book is on the whole a very accurate and concise guide to its subject.

The range of topics covered and the author's attention to his readers' level of knowledge ensures that *A1200 Next Steps* forms a very useful rung in the ladder from novice to seasoned Amiga user.



Mail order misery

When mail order companies swipe your money and don't provide you with the product you wanted, what can you do? Adam Phillips reports

Mail order is at its best reliable, fast, and cheaper than the shops, but at its worst has slow delivery times, low quality equipment and can result in a faulty product posted to your front doorstep.

Like any kind of business transaction, whether it be buying a house or sending off for a piece of software, the first rule is knowing your rights – essential if you want to have the best chance of not being ripped off.

Due to the recession, many small companies have sunk without a trace leaving, in some cases, bitter customers wondering where their money went.

You may think that once a business has folded, it's tough luck and you may as well forget any cash refund. Well not necessarily – if you have paid a deposit or even an advance payment, you automatically become a creditor.

This allows you to be on the receiving end for some kind of pay back but there is always a rub – a strict pecking order with the banks, financial institutes and everyone's friend, the Inland Revenue office, being first in line for any cash hand outs.

Under the Insolvency Act of 1986, you are allowed by law to know exactly what has happened to the deceased business so put your case in writing and contact the liquidators or receivers.

From there, several things can happen. If you have returned the goods for repair and they're still under warranty, it's well worth considering a visit to the premises and having a chat with the administrators or liquidators in person with the intention of laying your hands on your property.

If possible, take along evidence of purchase such as cheque stubs or more ideally, receipts while making sure that you have proof of identity to verify who you say you are.

Alternatively, you may have ordered and paid for the product and it's sitting in the offices with your name and address on it. If so, there's a good case for claiming it.

If you paid by credit card for a price over £100, then it's possible to claim a refund from the credit card company under the Consumer Credit Act. Though this is not a popular option in the eyes of credit card companies, it's well within your legal rights. If you placed the order through a magazine or newspaper and it displays the either the Perodical Publisher's Association symbol or the Mail Order Protection Scheme, then you are covered for a claim. Make sure that you do this within three months of the particular company's last advert appearing or this protection is rendered invalid.

Another major problem for customers are delays. While in the strictest sense companies should not take any money or cash any cheques until the order is fulfilled, it's not illegal so you have to approach the problem in a different way.

One of the first rules of home delivery is if you think you may be out when a parcel may be delivered, remember to give them an alternative address such as a neighbour's or another time to drop by.

If you need your package sent as soon as possible, a useful piece of legal talk is to write to the company's head office if the goods have not appeared to inform them that you need to take delivery by a certain date as "time is of the essence".

Set a reasonable time for delivery such as a week to ten days and if this expires, you become entitled to a refund because the mail order firm is in breach of its contract.

On top of this, you may also be entitled to claim reasonable compensation brought about by the delay, especially if it ended in you buying the product from elsewhere in the meantime.

The final and most frustrating problem is when the parcel arrives at your house and on opening it you realise that the wretched thing is faulty. If the goods were damaged in transit then it's not the supplier's responsibility and therefore the matter must be taken up with the carrier or Post Office (pop in to your local PO and get a claim form if this should happen).

If, on the other hand, the goods are defective, you have the same right under the Sale of Goods Act as if you'd bought the item directly over the counter. Contact the supplier as soon as possible and by law, you are entitled to a full refund.

Phone and put your complaint in writing and send it by recorded delivery so that they cannot deny anything at a later stage, and arrange for the return of the goods. Also make sure to ask for the return carriage charges to be reimbursed as well.

Happy shopping!

CONTACTS

Advertising Standards Authority
Brook House, 2-16 Torrington Place
London WC1E 7HN

Mailing Preference Service
Freepost 22, London W1E 7EZ

Mail Order Protection Scheme
16 Tooks Court, London EC4A 1LB

Periodical Publishers Association
Imperial House, 15-19 Kingsway
London WC2B 6UN

The Thirteen Commandments

1.When first clapping eyes on something you must have, check that the magazine/catalogue is up to date – it has been known for cheques to be sent off for offers that were made in 1989.

2. Read the advertisement closely. Look for the small print so if anything does go wrong, you're fully aware of what the advert stated – delivery times, guarentees etc. The publication you are ordering from is covered by the British Code of Advertising. The BCAP states that ads should give a delivery time and that it should be no more than 28 days.

3. Look out for extra costs – postage and packaging can sometimes add a few pounds onto the overall price. Some companies include p&p in the advertised price while others seem to forget until the bill arrives.

4. Check availability with a simple phone call. Sometimes the item you want may be out of stock so there may be a delay. Note down what they say.

5. Enquire about rules and costs before you place the order.

6. Look out for the MOPS or PPA symbols and use a credit card for extra protection if paying in advance.

7. When you write off for the goods, remember to include your name, telephone number and address and make sure it's legible. Your number is important for any subsequent delivery problems that may occur.

8. If you wish to avoid mailshots landing on your doormat every month, tell the company that you don't want them to pass on your name or address to any third parties.

For extra security against junk mail, write to the Mailing Preference Service. Any company wishing to send direct mail should check the MPS register and exclude the people who have placed themselves on it.

9. Keep copies of the order with the date on it as well as any subsequent correspondence that may occur with the company. Make photocopies – computer files on disk are frowned upon by modern courts.

10. Make notes of any phone conversations you have with the mail order firm and the names of the people you speak to – this kind of information can be very useful as a legal weapon for evidence.

11. Never send money through the post – the Post Office advises strongly against it and will not refund you in anyway if it is stolen or "misplaced".

12. Only send cash in the form of cheque or postal order when absolutely required to. Keep records of any financial transactions you make.

13. Conatct the Advertising Standards Authority if all demands are ignored and if push come to shove, consider legal action in a court of law.

BRIAN FOWLER

Computers Ltd

Commodore AMIGA

11 North Street, EXETER, DEVON, EX4 3QS

A1200

New Desktop Dynamite Pack A1200 with Oscar, Dennis, Wordworth aga, Dpaint aga !!! Great Value !!! £349.95 !!!



14Mhz 68020, 2 MB RAM, 3.5" Floppy Drive, AGA Chip Set, 262,000 Colours On Screen and Free On-Site Warranty.

Free Technical Support

£289.95

External Hard Drives. Super Fast --- only £249.99 for 130Megabytes

CD32

New Dangerous Streets Pack.

We stock CD ROM Disks



£289.95

Add On Port - connect to another Amiga or PC Only £29.99!

A4000

The Ultimate Power Machine!

Choice of Fast Processors. AA Chip Set, 16.8 Million Colour Palette. Superb flicker-free display. 3.5" HD Drive (MSDOS capable), Fast IDE Hard Drive (SCSI Available), 4 Zorro III Expansion Slots. Complete with WB3 and Manuals. Full On-Site Warranty. Various Configurations. Call for compatibility reassurance! These are UK machines, not "grey imports".

030 ***Call Now For New Low Prices*** **040** ***Phone for best deal***

THE AMIGA CONNECTION *Your One Stop Cable and Connector Shop.* **PHONE**	***Expert buying advice, friendly service and excellent support.*** **FREE**	***CD32 Add-On Port. Connect to Amiga or PC*** **£29.99** ***CD32 Full Expansion Unit available soon!***
Canon BJ10sx Popular and affordable near laser quality Bubble Jet. **£224.99** ***Studio Printer Software Get the most from your Printer*** **£49.95**	***HP DJ550C Colour Deskjet with full CMYK printing. Superb output! Excellent paper handling!*** **£474.99**	***MICROVITEC Cub-Scan supports all AGA modes*** **£429.99** ***Also available, Commodore's 1940 and 1942 monitors. Phone for best prices.*** **Phone**
USR Sportster Fax Modem 14400bps One of the fastest modems you can buy. **£289.99**	***Fed-CASE Flowcharting Code Generator We are the UK Distributors for this excellent product.*** **£74.99**	***24 bit graphics cards Full selection available Phone to discuss your requirements*** **£Phone**

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Western Digital	GVP	Hard drives
Caviar IDE drive 128k cache 340 MB - FAST!	*A1230 Series II 50MHz Accelerator. Battery Backed Clock &c, &c*	*Fast Fujitsu 330MB SCSI Hard Drive*
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Send your cheque/Postal order to the address above. Clearly state your name, address, telephone number and the product(s) you require. Prices can change so please phone to confirm price and availability. Please allow seven working days for your cheque to clear.

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STARS of yesteryear

Office gold

Old software never dies – it just gets cheaper, as we find out in our look back at some of the best low cost software around

PageStream 2.2

Not much more than a year since its release, PageStream 2.2 is still one of the Amiga's best professional DTP packages and one which is due for an imminent upgrade in the shape of PageStream 3.0. With the new version, Soft Logik promise features to rival Quark Xpress, but v2.2 is still a powerful piece of kit and can now be picked up for a song.

PageStream has always benefited from Soft Logik's strict adherence to Amiga style guides and is thus one of the easiest packages to start using. All the usual key combinations work as one would expect and all requesters are immediately familiar, ensuring a smooth and easy learning curve.

Features of the package include the ability to use any type of font, high quality PostScript output, and advanced page design tools such as rotate box, EPS import, and master pages. The program is capable of handling anything from a simple flyer to a complete magazine layout and is matched only by the latest versions of ProPage for flexibility.

Hunting around and studying the small ads can net you a copy of PageStream for well under £100, and it can often be found at computer shows selling for only £60 or so, a price at which it is the DTP bargain of the decade, particularly as it works perfectly on AGA Amigas even though it doesn't have a 256-colour screen mode.

Score: 90%
AGA: OK
Average price: £60 to £100

Pen Pal

Still officially supplied by Gordon Harwood Computers (0773 836781) complete with technical support, Pen Pal has been superseded by Final Copy II and can therefore be found in mail order ads for as little as £29.

At this price, one of the Amiga's friendliest word processors is a real snip, and should appeal to anyone with an unaccelerated Amiga. Pen Pal is easy on system resources and can handle graphics faster than most other wysiwyg packages.

There are several structured drawing tools built in to the program to aid in page design, making Pen Pal a good basic DTP program as well as a word processor.

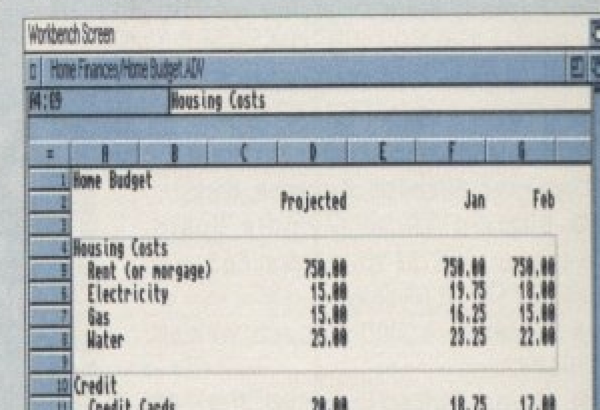
As a bonus, the package has its own simple database program which can be used to generate mail merge lists or for a variety of tasks including keeping track of books, tapes, or CDs. Pen Pal has no AGA support but will work happily on the new Amigas so long as the user doesn't mind a 16-colour display.

Score: 85%
AGA: OK
Average price: £30

Gold Disk Office

Comprising a simple word processor, database, PageSetter 2, spreadsheet, and graph plotting program, Gold Disk Office is an all-encompassing bundle of productivity. The component parts of the package are in themselves a little short on advanced features, but as a whole, Office is great value for money.

Now circulating for around £45, Office has no competition other than Platinum Works, which it beats in the



modernity stakes, and could be the answer to many tight budgets.

You won't be competing with Final Writer or Superbase Personal 2, but for the vast majority of home office tasks you will never need another package.

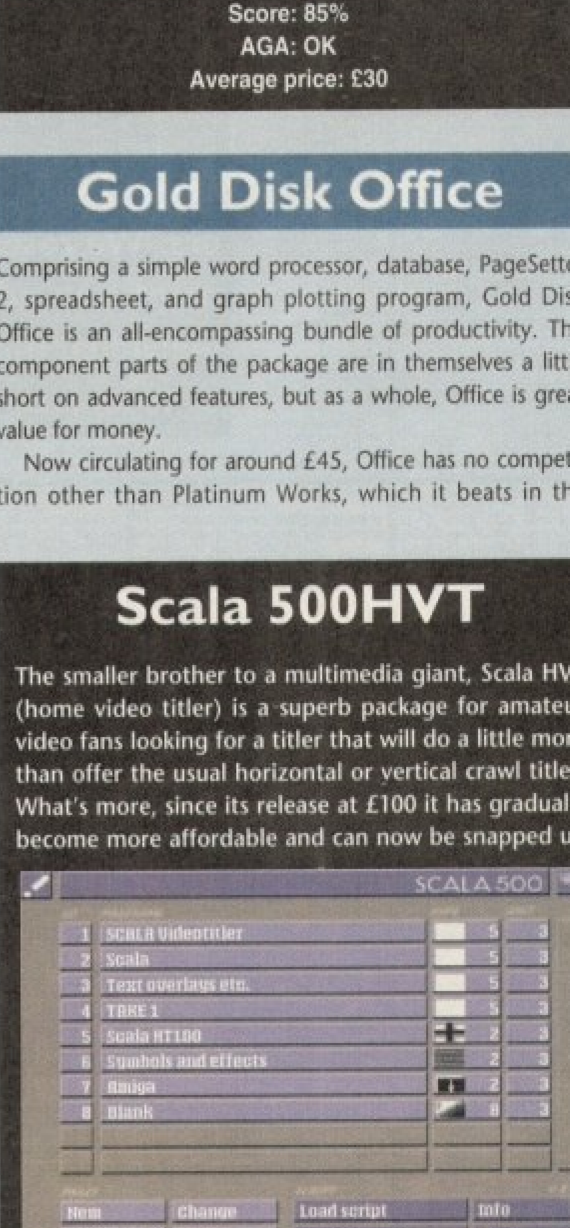
The two most impressive elements are Page, which is basically a version of PageSetter 2, and Calc, a cut down version of the ProCalc spreadsheet.

Both are advanced in their own right and could stand on their own two feet as budget releases, so their inclusion in this package is a boon.

Score: 88%
AGA: OK
Average price: £45

Scala 500HVT

The smaller brother to a multimedia giant, Scala HVT (home video titler) is a superb package for amateur video fans looking for a titler that will do a little more than offer the usual horizontal or vertical crawl titles. What's more, since its release at £100 it has gradually become more affordable and can now be snapped up for £70 or so. Using the supplied brushes or those the user designs in DPaint, a number of effects can be applied to scroll objects onto the screen from various angles at various speeds, and there are some excellent page transition effects.



All actions are controlled from a central screen in which effects, timing and page flipping are controlled so that when a script is set up the user need only hook up a genlock, hit the Run Script button, and sit back while Scala gets on with it.

The advanced features which have made Scala MM200 the king of the multimedia world are, of course, absent, but Scala HVT can be used from floppy disk, doesn't need wodges of RAM, and there's an upgrade path to the mighty MM200 if you decide to expand your horizons.

Score: 92%
AGA: OK
Average price: £75

Classifieds

A s long as your ad is five words or less, it's absolutely free! Should you want more space, you'll find unrivalled value-for-money – for instance, 25 words cost just £10.

Fill in the form below and send it to us with your payments (if applicable) – and remember to include your telephone number!

- Selling magazines, 50p, Tel: 0256 704932.
- Wanted: Movieclip Disks. Must be originals. Also Moviesetter manual. Tel: 0772 653243.
- Amiga games for sale. Tel: 0850 543864.
- Wanted: 1084s or CM8833. 0403 242102
- Wanted: Bone Cruncher game by Superior Software Ltd. Deluxe Paint3 Tutorial video. Tel: 0653 697793.
- Rocgen+ £99. Tel: 0625 429667.
- Wanted: A1200 contacts! Chaos, 54 Lochinver, Birch Hill, Bracknell, Berks.
- Blizzard Turbo Memory Board, 14MHz. Cost £130, accept £65. Tel: 0638 743718 (evenings).
- Swansea A1200 contacts wanted. 796722.
- Amiga contacts wanted. Rob, PO BOX 47, Ballina, N.S.W. 2478, Australia.
- A4000 memory, £40. 0860 192930.
- GVP 4Mb simms, £90. 0622 663115.
- Supra 52Mb Hard Drive for A500+ with 1Mb RAM. £110. Tel: Gavin, 081 393 7649.
- A500 1.5Mb inc. Wordworth, 10 games, joysticks. contact 0737 221775. (Evenings only).
- A590 2Mb RAM WB2.04, £120, Lattice SAS/C complete £100, Home Accounts 2, £20. Tel: 0622 725402.
- AVIDEO-YC, £390. 0570 45440.
- Accelerator, Flicker Fixer, for 1500. Tel: 0947 820008.
- Amiga 500+, £140. Tel: 0638 730798.
- Wanted; "Desktop Dynamite" software. 081 673 5685.
- Blizzard Accelerator, £65. Boxed. Tel: 0638 743718.
- Amiga A500, 2Mb. £150. 0296 713346.

PLEASE NOTE: We can only accept classified advertisements from bona fide private sellers/buyers. We reserve the right to – and will – refuse to print any advertisement from any company or individual masquerading as such. Don't waste your time and money!

Name ....

Address ....

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Postcode ....Telephone ....

Classifieds

					FREE
					£6
					£10

Cheques should be made payable to " Amiga Computing"

Please include my advertisement in the next available issue of *Amiga Computing*. I confirm that the advert is not selling illegal copies of software or hardware that do not belong to me. I permit you to publish my address/telephone number only if I have included these details within my advertisement copy. I am over 18 years of age (applicants under 18 must get a parent or guardian to sign below).

Signed ....

Send to: **AC Classifieds, Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP**

Remember to include your phone number/address in the advert as well as on the form!

AMIGA COMPUTING

ADVERTISERS' INDEX

HARD TIMES

If you've just recovered from investing in a new machine it's time to talk add-ons. So now Hard Times brings you the definitive guide to the system-building basics

For most people computing invariably starts with a portable television. Although fine for games there comes a point when a portable simply doesn't do the machine or the user justice.

Literally any productivity package is taken into the next dimension of usability with the addition of a monitor. Word processing for example becomes a pleasure rather than a blurred squinting excise in sado-masochism.

In short, a decent monitor is worth every penny and when it comes to monitors they don't come much better than the new Commodore 1942. This particular unit is ideal for owners equipped with either an A1200 or A4000 – as both machines are only at their best in the hi-res screen modes offered by the ECS and AGA.

Better still the 1942 doesn't suffer the compatibility problems which have haunted various computer/monitor combinations. Thanks to its bisync design the majority of the AGA resolutions are available but perhaps more importantly you can use 15.5kHz for standard PAL – allowing games and lo-res screens to operate perfectly.

Although the financial appeal of a med-res monitor may tempt you to plump for the likes of a Philips CM8833 or Commodore 1084S, don't even consider it! There's literally no comparison between a med-res and an interlaced/productivity display – especially if you're interested in more than just games.

However if games are your primary concern my personal choice would definitely be the Commodore 1084S. At around £199 it's easily the best value – and in my opinion the best med-res monitor regardless of cost.

Floppies

Ok, I did get a little carried away introducing the monitor bit. In my unbridled excitement I forgot the absolute misery that running a single floppy system can induce.

Although often overlooked in the rush to invest in a hard disk or monitor an extra floppy comes second only to the mouse in the hierarchy of important pluggy-in things.

In my opinion there are two best buys, these being the RocTec and the Zappo – with the latter being the second choice courtesy of its slightly inferior design.

Unlike most drives there are very few frills and no unnecessary gadgetry, just basic dependable hardware that does the job – with the minimum of fuss and expense.

Although both units are pretty basic each has a disable switch along with the option to daisy-chain additional units. If you can live without funky LEDs, flashing lights and anti-virus, either drive is a great investment.

Mice

Although the Commodore mouse has come on leaps and bounds of late – thanks to the A600, 1200 and 4000 – there's still room for improvement, especially if you plan to use your machine primarily in an artistic vein.

If you fit this particular bill my personal choice would be the Mega Mouse from Gasteiner. As well as being arguably the best mouse on the market it still manages to retail as one of the cheapest.

And if quality is what you're after Gasteiner have just launched a new 400dpi version for just £14.95 which makes the average £70 optical look very sad indeed.

It's true that its mechanical rather than optical design means the occasional cleaning of ball and rollers is essential, but that's a small price to pay considering the excellent price and overall quality.

Aside from the accuracy one of the most appealing aspects of the Mega is it's excellent ergonomic design which fits snugly into the palm while the perfectly weighted buttons wait attentively with micro-switches at the ready.

Printers

With the vast array of printers on the market and the varied requirements of the average punter, simply singling out a particular printer as the best buy across the board would be at best a rather hit and miss exercise. However there are a few basic pointers which could come in handy.

For those with an occasional need for hard copy a dot matrix is the ideal choice. However, if at all possible try to avoid the temptation of taking in the cheapest route possible – namely a 9-pin.

Although 9-pin printers have come a long way it must be said that with the relative price difference being so small a 24-pin is a much more attractive proposition.

For you extra investment you'll receive much higher quality output especially on graphic files, and with many 24 pins offering colour upgrade kits the difference between the two formats can really pay-off later on – if and when you decide to upgrade to colour.

The benefits don't stop with simple graphics, in fact all aspects of Amiga productivity benefit hugely from the extra clarity available from 24 pins. If you do intend to invest in the aforementioned 1942 Bisync you'll soon become accustomed to high quality display and expect it from your hard-copy as well as your screen display.

Modems

If you fancy branching out from the confines of the back bedroom a modem may well be on the shopping list. If so, here's a few points that the novice might well bare in mind prior to investing.

Like most computer related investments it's not wise to skimp from the off-set. Although it's tempting to save some cash initially you'll end up paying for this apparent saving tenfold later-on as ridiculously expensive phones bills pouring through the letter box.

Although there are hundreds of modems on the market it's wise to stick to units which offer baud rates at or above 2,400. Even at this speed you could be throwing cash away in the long term as the usual standard tends to be 9,600 rather than the slightly outdated 2,400.

My advice is: If you can easily afford a 2,400 modem save your money and invest in a 9,600. If you can only just manage a 2,400 I'd think long and hard about comms as a potential pastime – believe me it ain't as interesting as the popular press would have us all believe...

However if the urge to get on-line is just too strong to resist Supra offer a great range of modems which for a little extra cash can double up as a modem if the need arises.

Commodore 1942 Bisync
Price: £399
Supplier: Silica Systems
Tel: 081-309 1111

Mega Mouse
Price: £10.95 without mat and holder
Price: £14.95 400dpi version as above
Supplier: Gasteiner
Tel: 081-365 1151

Roclite drive
Price: £59.95
Supplier: Gordon
Tel: 0773 836781

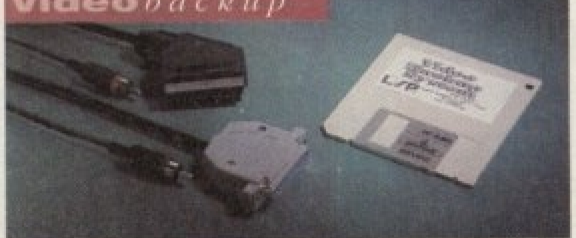
Zappo drive
Price: £51.50
Indi Direct
Tel: 0543 419999



power*optical*

128MB Optical Internal £779
128MB Optical External.........£879
128MB Optical Disk £39.95
SCSI Controller A2000...........£129

video*backup*



Use a VCR as a backup storage advice, 200 Amiga floppy disks fit on to a 4Hr tape which can be used for an alternative hard disk backup system. What's more you can watch T.V on your 1084s monitor.

£60

floptical*drive*

The Floptical stores 20MB of data on a 3.5" disk (a SCSI interface is required).

Floptical A2000 Kit £289
Floptical A500 External.........£389

syquest*drive*

3.5" Removable HD from Syquest. Each cartridge stores 105MB. Syquest speed is 17ms.

3.5" Syquest SCSI External..£599
3.5" 105MB Cartridge................£79

scsi*drives*

We can supply SCSI or IDE 3.5" drives in many sizes.

52QMB.......................................£169
80MB..£179
160MB £249
200MB £349

ide*internal*

2.5" Miniature internal HD for the A600/A1200, (these drives come complete with a cable and installation software)

60MB Internal HD......................£139
80MB Internal HD......................£179
120MB Internal HD £229

icd*products*

Trifecta 2000 LX Bare...................£139
Trifecta 2000 LX 80MB HD £239
Trifecta 2000 LX 160MB HD........£329
Trifecta 2000 LX 200MB HD........£399
Trifecta 500 LX Bare £195
Trifecta 500 LX 80MB HD............£295
Trifecta 500 LX 160MB HD £359
Trifecta 500 LX 200Mb HD...........£459

a600*memory*

1MB RAM with battery backed clock.

A600 Memory £39.95

1.5MB*memory*

Fully supports 1MB of chip RAM and compatible with Fatter Agnus. (Requires Kickstart 1.3 and above, not compatible with A500+. Your Amiga needs to be opened , this may effect your warranty)

1.5MB Memory.................................£85

1MB*thru'port*

Fully supports 1MB of chip RAM and fully compatible with Fatter Agnus. (Requires Kickstart 1.3 and above, not compatible with A500+. Your Amiga needs to be opened, this may effect your warranty)

1MB Thru' port................................£49

PC501+*card*



High quality memory card comes with 1MB of RAM on-board to expand your Amiga A500+ to 2MB of Chip RAM. (Fits in the trap-door, does not affect your warranty)

£36

a500*memory*

4 Chip 512K RAM expansion with or without battery backed clock. Free software included. (A500+ compatible)

A500 Card with clock £29
A500 Card without clock......................£24

a500*8mb board*

Expand your Amiga from 2MB to 8MB of RAM. Plugs into side slot, full auto config. and full through port.

A500 2MB Board.........................£139
A500 4MB Board.........................£219
A500 8MB Board.........................£299

a2000*8mb board*

2MB to 8MB expansion for the A2000. Full auto config., IDE interface and 12 months warranty

A2000 2MB Board......................£139
A2000 4MB Board......................£199
A2000 8MB Board £289

new*2MB chip ram*



Increase your Amiga's memory to 2MB of chip RAM, including 2MB 8375 Agnus, easy to fit (internal fitting), unlike every other 2MB chip RAM board currently available you A500 trap memory still works! fully compatible.

£159

special*offer*

PC1208 68882-20MHz OMB RAM board.

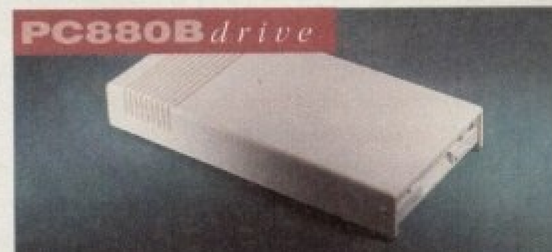
PC1208 68882 20MHz......£109.95

power*drives*

All Power Computing's disk drives come with a 12 month guarantee. The PC880B is available with Blitz Amiga, Blitz and X-Copy or Cyclone compatible (this drive is only available to registered owners of X-Copy Professional). The drive comes in a choice of two colours, black and cream.

PC880B with Blitz Amiga.......................£60
PC880B with Blitz, X-Copy...................£75
PC880B with black case (CDTV) £60
PC880E Economy Cyclone Comp.. ..£49.95
PC881 Amiga 500 internal drive.............£40
PC882 Amiga 2000 internal drive...........£40
PC883 Dual disk drive £125

PC880B*drive*



The award winning external disk drive which includes Anti-click (cures that annoying click), Virus blocker (prevents viruses) and built-in backup hardware. Now available with Cyclone compatible chip.

£60

x-backup*pro*

Extremely powerful disk back-up utility, uses the latest custom chip design. Hardware designed by Power Computing.

X-Backup Pro £29.95

A600/A1200 Colour Scanner available soon

Goods are sold subject to our standard terms and conditions of sale and are available on request. Specifications and prices are subject to change without notice, trademarks are acknowledged. All prices include VAT.



telephone *0234 843388*
facsimile *0234 840234*
technical *0234 841882*
(techincal is available from 2-5.30pm)

power *computing ltd*

epson *GT-6500*

A high resolution 24-bit colour flatbed scanner from Epson. Scan up to A4 in size on this 600DPI scanner. Comes with PowerScan or ASDG (ASDG is an extra £99). GT-8000 scans up to 800DPI.



Epson GT6500 PowerScan	**£699**
Epson GT6500 ASDG	**£798**
Epson GT8000 PowerScan	**£1199**
Epson GT8000 ASDG	**£1298**
Document Feeder	**£399**

power *scan 4*



Completely re-designed powerful user interface, produce 256 greyscale images (on a AGA machine), scan in 64 greyscales (non AGA Amiga can only display 16), add colour to greyscale images, special effects, new support for 18-bit scanner, add text to scans, available with mono or colour scanner.

£119

power *scanners*

PowerScanner 4 (mono)	**£119**
PowerScanner 4 (colour)	**£239**
PowerScanner 4 inc. OCR	**£159**
PowerScanner 3	**£99**
Scanner 4 Upgrade inc. interface	**£50**
Scanner 4 Upgrade software	**£20**
OCR Junior Software	**£49**
OCR Full Version Upgrade	**£49**

(OCR full version is only available to registered users of OCR Junior)

auto *rom sharer*

ROM Share	**£19.95**
ROM Share inc. v2.04	**£50**
ROM Share inc. v1.3	**£39**
ROM Share A600	**£29**
ROM Share A600 v1.3	**£55**

supra *modems*

Comes complete with English phone cable, RS 232 serial cable, PSU & comms software.

Supra Fax Modem+	**£119**
Supra Fax Modem 32BIS	**£229**

pc *1208*

Power Computings latest 32-bit memory expansion for the Amiga 1200 is now available. The PC1208 uses the latest industry standard 32-bit Simm technology which allows you to use 1MB, 2MB, 4MB and 8MB modules. Simply adding either a PC1208 to your Amiga 1200 will increase its processing speed by 219%, comes with real-time battery backed clock and optional FPU available.

Bare

PC1208	**£69.95**
PC1208 + 68881 20MHz	**£96.95**
PC1208 + 68882 20MHz	**£109.95**
PC1208 + 68882 33MHz	**£119.95**
PC1208 + 68882 40MHz	**£139.95**
PC1208 + 68882 50MHz	**£179.95**

With 2MB

PC1208 + 68881 20MHz	**£139.95**
PC1208 + 68882 20MHz	**£159.95**
PC1208 + 68882 33MHz	**£199.95**
PC1208 + 68882 40MHz	**£225.95**
PC1208 + 68882 50MHz	**£265.95**

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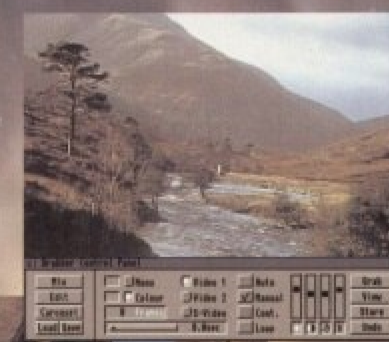
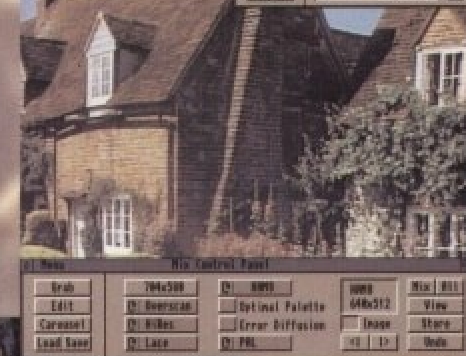
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